



*Here in the rich, the honour'd fam'd and great—
See the false scale of Happiness complete—*

Philip Simon del.



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AN *1507/677.*
ESSAY ON MAN.

By ALEXANDER POPE, ESQ.

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THE
D E S I G N.

HAVING propos'd to write some pieces on Human Life and Manners, such as (to use my Lord Bacon's expression) *come home to Men's Business and Bosoms*, I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering *Man* in the abstract, his *Nature* and his *State*; since, to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what *condition* and *relation* it is placed in, and what is the proper *end* and *purpose* of its *being*.

The science of Human Nature, is like all other sciences, reduced to a *few clear points*: There are not *many certain truths* in this world. It is therefore in the Anatomy of the Mind as in that of the Body; more good will accrue to mankind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by studying too much such finer nerves and vessels, the conformations and uses of which will for ever escape our observation. The *disputes* are all upon these last, and I will venture to say, they have less sharpened the *wits* than the *hearts* of men against each other, and have diminished the practice, more than advanced the theory, of Morality. If I could flatter myself that this Essay has any Merit, it is in steering betwixt the extremes of Doc-

trines seemingly opposite, in passing over terms utterly unintelligible, and in forming a *temperate*, yet not *inconsistent*, and a *short*, yet not *imperfect* system of Ethics.

This I might have done in prose; but I chose verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons. The one will appear obvious; that principles, maxims, or precepts so written, both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him afterwards: The other may seem odd, but is true. I found I could express them more *shortly* this way than in prose itself; and nothing is more certain, than that much of the *force* as well as *grace* of arguments or instructions depends on their *conciseness*. I was unable to treat this part of my subject more in *detail*, without becoming dry and tedious; or more *poetically*, without sacrificing perspicuity to ornament, without wandering from the precision, or breaking the chain of reasoning: If any man can unite all these without diminution of any of them, I freely confess he will compass a thing above my capacity.

What is now published, is only to be considered as a *general Map* of MAN, marking out no more than the *greater parts*, their *extent*, their *limits*, and their *connection*, but leaving the particular to be more fully delineated in the charts which are to follow. Consequently these Epistles in their progress (if I have health and leisure to make any progress) will be less dry, and more susceptible of poetical ornament. I am only here opening the *fountains* and clearing the passage. To deduce the *rivers*, to follow them in their course, and to observe their effects, may be a task more agreeable.



AN
ESSAY ON MAN.

IN FOUR EPISTLES

To H. St. JOHN, Lord BOLINGBROKE.

ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE I.

*Of the Nature and State of Man, with
Respect to the UNIVERSE.*

OF Man in the abstract.—I. That we can judge only with regard to our own system, being ignorant of the relations of systems and things, Ver. 17, etc. II. That Man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a Being suited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general Order of things, and conformable to Ends and Relations to him unknown, Ver. 35, etc. III. That it is partly upon his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future state, that all his happiness in the present depends, Ver. 77, etc. IV. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cause of Man's error and misery. The impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or im-

perfection, justice or injustice, of his dispensations, Ver. 109, etc. V. The absurdity of conceiving himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world, which is not in the natural, Ver. 131, etc. VI. The unreasonableness of his complaints against Providence, while on the one hand he demands the Perfections of the Angels, and on the other the bodily qualifications of the Brutes; though, to possess any of the sensitive faculties in a higher degree, would render him miserable, Ver. 173, etc. VII. That throughout the whole visible world, an universal order and gradation in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to Man. The gradations of sense, instinct, thought, reflection, reason; that Reason alone countervails all the other faculties, Ver. 207. VIII. How much further this order and subordination of living creatures may extend, above and below us; were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected creation must be destroyed, Ver. 233. IX. The extravagance, madness, and pride of such a desire, Ver. 250. X. The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to Providence, both as to our present and future state, Ver. 281, etc. to the end.



EPISTLE I.

A WAKE, my ST. JOHN! leave all meaner things
 To low ambition, and the pride of Kings.
 Let us (since Life can little more supply
 Than just to look about us and to die)
 Expatriate free o'er all this scene of Man; 5
 A mighty maze! but not without a plan;
 A Wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot,
 Or Garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.

COMMENTARY.

THE Opening of this poem, [in fifteen lines] is taken up in giving an account of the Subject; which, agreeably to the title, is an *ESSAY ON MAN*, or a Philosophical Enquiry into his *Nature* and *End*, his *Passions* and *Pursuits*.

The Exordium relates to the whole Work, of which the *Essay on Man* was only the first book. The 6th, 7th, and 8th lines allude to the subjects of this *Essay*, viz. the general Order and Design of Providence; the Constitution of the human Mind; the origin, use, and end of the Passions and Affections, both selfish and social; and the wrong pursuits of Happiness in Power, Pleasure, etc. The 10th, 11th, 12th, etc. have relation to the subjects of the books intended to follow, viz. the Characters and Capacities of Men, and the Limits of Science, which once transgressed, Ignorance begins, and Errors without end succeed. The 13th and 14th, to the knowledge of Mankind, and the various Manners of the Age.

The Poet tells us next [line 16th] with what design he wrote, viz.

“To vindicate the ways of God to Man.”

The Men he writes against, he frequently informs us, are such as *weigh their opinion against Providence*, (Ver. 114) such as *cry, if Man's unhappy, God's unjust*, (Ver.

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VER. 7, 8, *A Wild—Or Garden,*] The *Wild* relates to the human *passions*, productive (as he explains in the second Epistle) both of good and evil. The *Garden*, to human *reason*, so often *tempting* us to transgress the bounds God has set to it, and to wander in fruitless enquiries.

Together let us beat this ample field,
 Try what the open, what the covert yield ; 10
 The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore
 Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar ;
 Eye Nature's walks, shoot Folly as it flies,
 And catch the manners living as they rise ;
 Laugh where we must, be candid where we can ; 15
 But vindicate the ways of God to Man.

COMMENTARY.

118.) or such as fall into the notion, *that Vice and Virtue there is none at all*, (Ep. ii. Ver. 212.) This occasions the Poet to divide his vindication of the ways of God into two parts. In the first of which he gives direct answers to those objections which libertine Men, on a view of the disorders arising from the perversity of the human will, have intended against Providence : And in the second, he obviates all those objections, by a true delineation of human Nature ; or a general, but exact, *map of Man*. The first epistle is employed in the management of the first part of this dispute ; and the three following in the discussion of the second. So that this whole book constitutes a complete *Essay on Man*, written for the best purpose, *to vindicate the ways of God*.

NOTES.

VER. 12. *Of all who blindly creep, etc.*] i. e. Those who only follow the blind guidance of their passions ; or those who leave behind them common sense and sober reason, in their high flights through the regions of Metaphysics. Both which follies are exposed in the fourth Epistle, where popular and philosophical errors concerning happiness are detected. The figure is taken from *animal life*.

VER. 15. *Laugh where we must, etc.*] Intimating that human *follies* are so strongly absurd, that it is not in the power of the most *compassionate*, on some occasions, to restrain their mirth : And that its *crimes* are so flagitious, that the most *candid* have seldom an opportunity, on this subject, to exercise their virtue.

VER. 16. *VINDICATE the ways of God to Man*] Milton's phrase judiciously altered, who says, *JUSTIFY the ways of God to Man*. Milton was addressing himself to BELIEVERS, and delivering reasons, or explaining

I. Say first, of God above, or Man below,
 What can we reason, but from what we know?
 Of Man, what see we but his station here,
 From which to reason, or to which refer? 20
 Through worlds unnumber'd tho' the God be known,
 'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 17. *Say first, of God above, or Man below, etc.]*
 The Poet having declared his *Subject*; his *End of writing*; and the *Quality of his Adversaries*; proceeds (from Ver. 16 to 23) to instruct us, from whence he intends to draw his arguments; namely, from the *visible things* of God in this system, to demonstrate the *invisible things* of God, his *eternal Power* and *Godhead*: And why? because we can *reason only from what we know*; and as we know no more of *Man* than what we see of his station here; so we know no more of *God* than what we see of his dispensations in this station; being able to trace him no further than to the limits of our own system. This naturally leads the Poet to exprobrate the miserable Folly and Impiety of pretending to pry into

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the ways of God: this idea, the word *justify*, precisely conveys. Pope was addressing himself to UNBELIEVERS, and exposing such of their objections whose ridicule and absurdity arises from the judicial blindness of the objectors; he therefore more fitly employs the word VINDICATE, which conveys the idea of a confutation attended with punishment. Thus, *suscipere vindictam legis*, to undertake the defence of the Law, implies punishing the violators of it.

VER. 19, 20. *Of Man what see we but his station here,
 From which to reason, or to which refer?]*

The sense is, "We see nothing of Man, but as he stands at present in his station here: From which station, all our reasonings on his *nature* and *end* must be drawn; and to this station they must all be referred." The consequence is, that our reasonings on his *nature* and *end* must needs be very imperfect.

VER. 21. *Through worlds unnumber'd, etc.]* Hinc cognoscimus solummodo per Proprietates suas et Attributiones, et per sapientissimas et optimas rerum structuras et causas finales. *Newtoni Princ. Schol. gen. sub. fin.*

He, who through vast immensity can pierce,
 See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
 Observe how system into system runs, 25
 What other planets circle other suns,
 What vary'd Being peoples ev'ry star,
 May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are.
 But of this frame, the bearings and the ties,
 The strong connections, nice dependencies, 30
 Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
 Look'd through? or can a part contain the whole?
 Is the great chain, that draws all to agree,
 And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?
 II. Presumptuous Man! the reason would'st thou find,
 Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind? 36

COMMENTARY.

and call in question, the profound dispensations of Providence: Which reproof contains (from Ver. 22 to 43) a sublime description of the Omniscience of God, and the miserable Blindness and Presumption of Man.

NOTES.

VER. 30. *The strong connections, nice dependencies.*
 The thought is very noble, and expressed with great beauty, and philosophic exactness. The system of the Universe is a combination of *natural* and *moral* Fitnesses, as the human system is, of *body* and *spirit*. By the *strong connections*, therefore, the Poet alludes to the *natural* part; and by the *nice dependencies*, to the *moral*. For the *Essay on Man* is not a system of NATURALISM, on the Philosophy of Bolingbroke, but a system of NATURAL RELIGION on the Philosophy of Newton. Hence it is, that where he supposes disorders may tend to some greater good in the *natural* world, he supposes they may tend likewise to some greater good in the *moral*, as appears from these sublime images in the following lines:

- "If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design,
 Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?
 "Who knows, but he, whose hand the light'ning forms,
 "Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms,
 "Pours fierce Ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
 "Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge Mankind?"

VER. 35 to 42.] In these lines the Poet has joined the beauty of argumentation to the sublimity of thought; where the similar instances, proposed for

First, if thou can'st, the harder reason guess,
 Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less?
 Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made
 Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade! 40
 Or ask of yonder argent fields above,
 Why Jove's Satellites are less than Jove?
 Of Systems possible, if 'tis confess'd
 That Wisdom infinite must form the best,

COMMENTARY.

VER. 43. *Of Systems possible, etc.*] So far the Poet's modest and sober introduction; in which he truly observes, that no wisdom less than omniscient

"Can tell why Heav'n has made us as we are"

Yet, though we be unable to discover the *particular* reasons for this mode of our existence, we may be assured in *general* that it is *right*. For now, entering upon his argument, he lays down this evident proposition as the foundation of his Thesis, which he reasonably supposes will be allowed him, *That, of all systems, infinite wisdom hath formed the best.* (Ver. 43, 44.) From whence he draws two consequences:

1. The *first* (from Ver. 44 to 51.) is, that as the best system cannot but be such a one as hath no incon-
 nected Void; such a one in which there is a perfect coherence and gradual subordination in all its parts; there must need be, in some part or other of the scale of reasoning life, such a creature as MAN: Which reduces the dispute to this absurd question, *Whether God has placed him wrong?*

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his adversaries examination, shew as well the *absurdity* of their complaints against Order, as the *fruitlessness* of their enquiries into the arcana of the Godhead.

VER. 41. *Or ask of yonder, etc.*] On these lines M. Voltaire thus descants—"Pope dit que l'homme ne peut savoir pourquoi les Lunes de Jupiter sont moins grandes que Jupiter? Il se trompe en cela c'est une erreur pardonnable. Il n'y a point de Mathématicien qui n'ent fait voir," etc. [Vol. ii. p. 384, Ed. Gen.] And so goes on to shew, like a great Mathematician as he is, that it would be inconvenient for the Page to be as big as his Lord and Master. It is pity all this fine reasoning should proceed on a ridiculous blunder.

Where all must full or not coherent be, 45
 And all that rises, rise in due degree;
 Then, in the scale of reas'ning life, tis plain,
 There must be, somewhere, such a rank as Man;
 And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
 Is only this, if God has plac'd him wrong? 50
 Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,
 May, must be right, as relative to all.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 51. *Respecting Man, etc.*] It being shewn that MAN, the *Subject* of this enquiry, has a necessary place in such a system as this is confessed to be, and it being evident, that the abuse of free-will, from whence proceed all moral evil, is the certain effect of such a creature's existence; the next question will be, How

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The Poet thus reproves the impious complainer of the order of Providence. "You are dissatisfied with the weakness of your condition. But, in your situation, the nature of things require just such a creature as you are: in a different situation it might have required, that you should be still weaker. And though you see not the reason of this in your own case; yet, that reasons there are, you may see in the case of other of God's creatures.

"Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made

"Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade?

"Or ask of yonder argent fields above,

"Why Jove's Satellites are less than Jove."

Here (says the Poet) the ridicule of the *Weeds'* and the *Satellites'* complaint, had they the faculties of speech and reasoning, would be obvious to all; because their very situation and office might have convinced them of their folly. Your folly, says the Poet to his complainers, is as great, though not so evident, because the reason is more out of sight; but that a reason there is, may be demonstrated from the attributes of the Deity. This is the Poet's clear and strong reasoning; from whence, we see, he was so far from saying, that Man could not know the cause *why Jove's Satellites were less than Jove*, that all the force of his reasoning turns upon this, that Man did see and know it, and should from thence conclude, that there was a cause of this inferiority as well in the *rational*, as in the *material* Creation.

In human works, tho' labour'd on with pain,
A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain ;
In God's one single can its end produce ; 55
Yet serves to second too some other use.
So Man, who here seems principal alone,
Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal ;
'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole. 60

When the proud steed shall know why Man restrains
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains ;

COMMENTARY.

these evils can be accounted for, consistently with the idea we have of God's moral attributes? Therefore,

2. The *second* consequence he draws from his principle, *That of all possible systems, infinite Wisdom has formed the best*, is, that whatever is wrong in our private system, is right as relative to the whole ;

"Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,

"*May, must* be right as relative to ALL."

That it *may*, he proves (from Ver. 52 to 61) by shewing in what consists the difference between the *systematic* works of God, and those of Man ; viz. that, in the latter, a thousand movements scarce gain one purpose ; in the former, one movement gains many purposes. So that

"—Man, who here seems *principal* alone,

"Perhaps acts *second* to some sphere unknown."

And acting thus, the appearance of *wrong* in the *partial* system may be *right* in the *universal* : for

"'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole."

That it *must*, the whole body of this epistle is employed to illustrate and enforce. Thus *partial Evil, is universal Good* ; and thus Providence is fairly acquitted.

VER. 61. *When the proud steed, etc.*] From all this the Poet draws a general conclusion (from Ver. 60 to 91) that, as what has been said is sufficient to vindicate the ways of Providence, Man should rest submissive and content ; and own every thing to be disposed for the best ; that to think of discovering the *manner* how God conducts this wonderful scheme to its completion, is as absurd as to imagine that the horse and ox shall ever be able to comprehend why they undergo such different treatment in the hand of Man ; nay, that

When the dull Ox, why now he breaks the clod,
Is now a victim, and now Egypt's God :
Then shall Man's pride and dulness comprehend 65
His actions', passions', being's use and end ;
Why doing, suffering, check'd, impell'd ; and why
This hour a slave, the next a deity.

Then say not Man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault ;
Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought : 70
His knowledge measur'd to his state and place ;
His time a moment, and a point his space.
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
What matter, soon or late, or here or there ?
The blest to day is as completely so, 75
As who began a thousand years ago

III. Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of Fate,
All but the page prescrib'd, their present state :
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know :
Or who could suffer Being here below ? 80
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play ?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.

VARIATIONS.

VER. 64. In the former Editions,
Now wears a garland, an Egyptian God
altered as above for the reason given in the note.
After VER. 68, the following lines in the first Ed.
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
What matters soon or late, or here or there ?
The blest to day is as completely so
As who began ten thousand years ago.

COMMENTARY.

such knowledge, if communicated, would be even *per-
nicious*, and make us *neglect or desert* our Duty here.
This he illustrates by the case of the lamb, which is
happy in not knowing the fate that attends it from the
butcher ; and from thence takes occasion to observe,
that God is the equal master of all creatures, and pro-
vides for the proper happiness of each and every of
them.

NOTES.

VER. 64 — *Egypt's God* :] Called so, because the
God *Apis* was worshipped universally over the whole
land of Egypt.

Oh blindness to the future ! kindly giv'n,
 That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n :
 Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
 A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
 Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
 And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

85

90

Hope humbly then ; with trembling pinions soar ;
 Wait the great teacher Death ; and God adore.
 What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
 But gives that Hope to be thy blessing now.

VARIATIONS.

After VER. 88, in the MS.

No great, no little ; 'tis as much decreed
 That Virgil's Gnat should die as Cæsar bleed.

VER. 93, 94. In the first Fol. and Quarto Ed.

What bliss *above* he gives not thee to know,
 But gives that Hope to be thy bliss *below*.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 91. *Hope humbly then, etc.*] But now an objector is supposed to put in, and say, " You tell us, indeed, that all things shall terminate in good ; but we see ourselves surrounded with present evil ; yet you forbid us all enquiry into the manner how we are to be extricated from it ; and, in a word, leave us in a very disconsolate condition." Not so, replies the Poet ; you may reasonably, if you please, receive much comfort from the HOPE of a happy futurity : a *Hope* implanted in the human breast by God himself, for this very purpose, as an earnest of that bliss, which, always flying from us here, is reserved for the good

NOTES.

VER. 87. *Who sees with equal eye, etc.*] Matth. x. 9.

VER. 93. *What future bliss, etc.*] It hath been objected, that " the *System of the best* weakens the other natural arguments for a future state ; because, if the evils which good Men suffer, promote the benefit of the whole, then every thing is here in order : and nothing amiss that wants to be set right : Nor has the good man any reason to expect amends, when the evils he suffered had such a tendency." To this it may be replied, 1. That the Poet tells us, (Sp. iv. Ver. 361.) that *God loves, from whole to parts*. Therefore, if in the beginning and progress of the moral System, the good of the whole be principally con-

Hope springs eternal in the human breast :

95

Man never Is, but always To be blest.

COMMENTARY.

Man hereafter. The reason why the Poet chuses to insist on this proof of a future state, in preference to others, is in order to give his system (which is founded in a sublime and improved *Platonism*) the greater grace of uniformity. For HOPE was *Plato's* peculiar argument for a future state ; and the words here employ'd—*The soul uneasy, etc.* his peculiar expression. The Poet in this place, therefore, says in express terms, that GOD GAVE US HOPE TO SUPPLY THAT FUTURE BLISS, WHICH HE AT PRESENT KEEPS HID FROM US. In his second epistle, Ver. 274, he goes still further, and says, this HOPE quits us not even at Death, when every thing mortal drops from us :

“ Hope travels through, nor quits us when we die.”

And in the fourth epistle, he shews, how the same HOPE is a *proof* of a future state, from the consideration of God's giving his Creatures no appetite in vain, or what he did not intend should be satisfied ;

“ He sees, why Nature plants in Man alone,

“ Hope of known bliss, and Faith in bliss unknown :

“ (Nature, whose dictates to no other kind

“ Are giv'n in vain, but what they seek they find)”

It is only for the *good man*, he tells us, that *Hope* leads from goal to goal etc. It would then, be strange indeed, if it should prove an illusion.

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1. Iusted, yet, on the completion of it, the good of particulars will be equally provided for. 2. The *system of the best* is so far from weakening those natural arguments, that it strengthens and supports them. For if those evils, to which good men are subject, be mere disorders, without any tendency to the greater good of the whole ; then, though we must, indeed, conclude that they will hereafter be set right, yet this view of things, representing God as suffering disorders for no other end than to set them right, gives us too low an idea of the divine wisdom. But if those evils (according to the *system of the best*) contribute to the greater perfection of the Whole ; such a reason may be then given for their permission, as supports our idea of divine wisdom to the highest religious pur-

The soul (uneasy, and confin'd) from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian ! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind ; 100

COMMENTARY.

VER. 99. *Lo, the poor Indian, etc.*] The Poet, as we said, having bid Man comfort himself with expectation of future happiness ; having shewn him that this HOPE is an earnest of it ; and put in one very necessary caution,

“ Hope humbly then, with trembling pinions soar ; ”
provoked at those miscreants whom he afterwards (Ep. iii. Ver. 263.) describes as building *Hell on spite, and Heav'n on pride*, he upbraids them (from Ver. 98, to 113.) with the example of the poor Indian, to whom also Nature hath given this common HOPE of Mankind : But tho' his untutor'd mind had betrayed him into many childish fancies concerning the

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poses. Then, as to the good man's hopes of a retribution, these still remain in their original force ; For our idea of God's justice, and how far that justice is engaged to a retribution, is exactly and invariably the same on either hypothesis. For though the *system of the best* supposes that the *evils themselves* will be fully compensated by the good they produce to the *Whole*, yet this is so far from supposing that *Particulars* shall suffer for a *general good*, that it is essential to *this system* that, at the completion of things, when the *Whole* is arrived to the state of the utmost perfection, *particular* and *universal* good shall coincide.

“ Such is the World's great harmony, that springs

“ From Order, Union, full Consent of things.

“ Where *small* and *great*, where *weak* and *mighty*, made

“ To *serve*, not *suffer*, *strengthen*, not *invade*, etc.

Epistle iii. Ver. 295.

Which coincidence can never be, without a retribution to each good man for the evils he has suffered here below.

VER. 97.—*from home*] The construction is,—*The soul uneasy and confined being from home*, expatiates, etc. By which words, it was the Poet's purpose to teach, that the present life is only a state of probation for another, more suitable to the essence of the soul, and to the free exercise of its qualities.

His soul, proud Science never taught to stray
 Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
 Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n,
 Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;
 Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd, 105
 Some happier island in the watry waste,
 Where slaves once more their native land behold,
 No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
 To Be, contents his natural desire,
 He asks no Angel's wing, no Seraph's fire; 110

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 108, in the first Ed.

But does he say the Maker is not good,
 Till he's exalted to what state he wou'd:
 Himself alone high Heav'n's peculiar care,
 Alone made happy, when he will, and where?

COMMENTARY.

nature of that future state, yet he is so far from excluding any part of his own species (a vice which could proceed only from the *pride* of false Science) that he humanely, tho' simply, admits even his *faithful* dog to bear him company.

NOTES.

VER. 110. *He asks no Angel's wing, no Seraph's fire;*]
 The French Translator, M. l'Abbe Du Resnal, has turned the line thus,

"Il ne desire point cette celeste flamme

"Qui des purs Seraphins devore, et nourrit l'ame."

i. e. *The savage does not desire that heavenly flame, which at the same time that it devours the souls of pure Seraphims, nourishes them.* On which Mr. de Croufaz who by the Assistance of a translation abounding in these absurdities, writ a *Commentary on the Essay on Man*, in which we find nothing but greater absurdities) remarks, "Mr. Pope, in exalting the fire of his poetry by an antithesis, throws occasionally his ridicule on those heavenly spirits." *The Indian*, says "the Poet, contents himself without any thing of that flame, which devours at the same time, that it nourisheth."—*Comm.* p. 77. But the Poet is clear of this imputation. Nothing can be more grave or sober than his English on this occasion; nor, I dare say, to do the Translator justice, did he aim to be ridiculous. It is the sober solid Theology of the Sorbonne. Indeed

But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

IV. Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of sense,
Weigh thy Opinion against Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fancy'st such, 115
Say, Here he gives too little, there too much:
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
Yet cry, If Man's unhappy, God's unjust;
If Man alone ingross not Heav'n's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there: 120
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Re-judge his justice, be the God of God.

In Pride, in reas'ning Pride, our error lies;
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 113. *Go, wiser thou, etc.*] He proceeds with these accusers of Providence (from Ver. 112 to 123.) and shews them, that complaints against the *established order of things* begin in the *highest absurdity*, from misapplied *reason* and *power*; and end in the *highest impiety*, in an attempt to degrade the God of heaven, and to assume his place:

“Alone made perfect here, immortal there:”

That is, be made God, *who only is perfect, and hath immortality*: To which sense the lines immediately following confine us:

“Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,

“Re-judge his justice, be the God of God.”

VER. 123. *In Pride, in reas'ning Pride, our error lies, etc.*] From these men, the Poet now turns to his friend; and (from Ver. 122 to 131.) remarks that the ground of all this extravagance is *Pride*; which, more or less, infects the whole reasoning Tribe; shews the ill effects of it, in the case of the fallen Angels; and observes, that *even* wishing to invert the laws of Order, is a lower species of their crime; he then

NOTES.

had such a writer as Mr. Pope used this School-jargon, we might have suspected he was not so serious as he should be. The Reader, as he goes along, will see more of this Translator's peculiarities. And the conclusion of the Commentary on the fourth Epistle will shew why I have been so careful to preserve them.

Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes, 125
 Men would be Angels, Angels would be Gods.
 Aspiring to be Gods, if Angels fell,
 Aspiring to be Angels, Men rebel :
 And who but wishes to invert the laws
 Of ORDER, sins against th' Eternal Cause. 130

V. Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,
 Earth for whose use? Pride answers, " 'Tis for mine ;
 " For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r,
 " Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r ;
 " Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew, 135
 " The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew ;
 " For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings ;
 " For me, health gushes from a thousand springs ;
 " Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise ;
 " My foot-stool earth, my canopy the skies." 140

COMMENTARY.

brings an instance of one of the effects of Pride, which is the folly of thinking every thing made *solely* for the use of Man; without the least regard to any other of the creatures of God.

"Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine, *etc.*"

The ridicule of imagining the *greater portions* of the material system to be *solely* for the use of Man, true Philosophy has sufficiently exposed: And Common-sense, as the Poet observes, instructs us to conclude, that our fellow-creatures, placed by Providence as the joint inhabitants of this Globe, are designed to be joint sharers with us of its blessings:

"Has God, thou fool! work'd solely for *thy* good,

"*Thy* joy, *thy* pastime, *thy* attire, *thy* food?

"Who for *thy* table feeds the wanton fawn,

"For *him* as kindly spreads the flow'ry lawn."

Epistle iii. Ver. 27.

NOTES.

VER. 131. *Ask for what end, etc.*] If there be any fault in these lines, it is not in the general sentiment, but in the ill choice of instances made use of in illustrating it. It is the highest absurdity to think that *Earth* is man's foot-stool, his canopy the *Skies*, and the *heavenly bodies* lighted up principally for his use; yet surely, it is very excusable to suppose fruits and minerals given for this end.

But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
 From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
 When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
 Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?

"No ('tis reply'd) the first Almighty Cause 145

"Acts not by partial but by gen'ral laws;

"Th' exceptions few; some change since all began:

"And what created perfect?"—Why then Man?

If the great end be human Happiness,

Then Nature deviates; and can Man do less? 150

COMMENTARY.

VER. 141. *But errs not Nature from this gracious end,*] The author comes next to the confirmation of his Thesis, That *partial moral Evil is universal Good*; but introduceth it with an allowed instance in the natural World, to abate our wonder at the phenomenon of moral Evil; which he forms into an argument on a concession of his adversaries. If we ask you, says he, (from Ver. 140 to 151) whether Nature doth not err from the gracious purpose of its Creator, when plagues, earthquakes, and tempests unpeople whole regions at a time; you readily answer, No: For that God acts by general, and not by particular laws; and that the course of matter and motion must be necessarily subject to some irregularities, because nothing is created perfect. I then ask why you should expect this perfection in Man? If you own that the *great end of God* (not withstanding all this deviation) be *general happiness*, then it is *Nature*, and not God, that deviates; and do you expect greater constancy in Man?

"Then Nature deviates; and can Man do less?"

That is, if Nature, or the inanimate system (on which God hath imposed his laws, which it obeys, as a machine obeys the hand of the workman) may in course of time deviate from its direction, as the best philosophy shews it may; where is the wonder that Man, who was created a free Agent, and hath it in his power every moment to transgress the eternal rule of Right, should sometimes go out of Order?

NOTES.

VER. 150. *Then Nature deviates, etc.*] "While
 "comets move in very eccentric orbs, in all manner

As much that end a constant course requires
 Of show'rs and sun-shine, as of Man's desires ;
 As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
 As Men for ever temperate, calm and wise.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 151. *As much that end, etc.*] Having thus shewn how moral evil came into the world, namely, by *Man's abuse of his own free will* ; our Poet comes to the point, the *confirmation* of his thesis, by shewing how *moral* evil promotes good ; and employs the *same* concessions of his adversaries, concerning *natural* evil, to illustrate it.

I He shews it tends to the *good* of the *Whole*, or *Universe*, (from Ver. 150 to 165.) and this by analogy. You own, says he, that storms and tempests, clouds, rain, heat, and variety of seasons are necessary (notwithstanding the accidental evil they bring with them) to the health and plenty of *this Globe* ; why then should you suppose there is not the same use, with regard to the *Universe*, in a Borgia or a Catiline ? But you say you can see the one, and not the other. You say right: one terminates in this *system*, the other refers to the *Whole* : which *Whole* can be comprehended by none but the great Author, himself. For, says the Poet in another place,

“ —of this Frame, the bearings, and the ties,
 “ The strong connections, nice dependencies,
 “ Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
 “ Look'd through ? or can a *part* contain the *whole* ? ”

Ver 29. et seq.

Own therefore, says he, that

“ From Pride, our very reas'ning springs ;
 “ Account for *moral*, as for *nat'ral* things :
 “ Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit ?
 “ In both, to *reason right* is to *submit* .”

NOTES.

“ of positions, blind Fate could never make all the
 “ planets move one and the same way in orbs concentric ; some inconsiderable irregularities excepted,
 “ which may have risen from the mutual actions of
 “ comets and planets upon one another, and which
 “ will be apt to increase, 'till this system wants a re-
 “ formation.” *Sir Isaac Newton's Optics, Quest. ult.*

If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design,
 Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline? 156
 Who knows but He, whose hand the lightning forms,
 Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms;
 Pours fierce Ambition in a Cæsar's mind, 159
 Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?
 From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs;
 Account for moral, as for nat'ral things:
 Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit?
 In both, to reason right is to submit.

NOTES.

VER. 155. *If plagues, etc.*] what hath misled Mr. De Croufaz in his censure of this passage, is his supposing the comparison to be between the effects of *two things in this sublunary world*; when not only the elegance, but the justness of it, consists in its being between the effects of a thing in the *universe at large*, and the familiar known effects of one *in this sublunary world*. For the position enforced in these lines is this, *that partial evil tends to the good of the whole*:

"Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,

"May, must be right, as relative to all."

Ver. 51.

How does the Poet enforce it? If you will believe this Critic, in illustrating the effects of partial moral evil in a particular system, by that of partial natural evil in the *same* system, and so he leaves his *position* in the lurch. But the Poet reasons at another rate: The way to prove his point, he knew, was to illustrate the effect of partial moral evil in the *universe*, by partial natural evil in a *particular system*. Whether partial moral evil tend to the good of the universe, being a question which, by reason of our ignorance of *many* parts of that Universe, we cannot decide but from known effects; the rules of good reasoning require that it be proved by *analogy*, *i. e.* setting it by, and comparing it with, a thing *clear and certain*; and it is a thing *clear and certain*, that partial natural evil tends to the good of our *particular system*.

VER. 157. *Who knows but He, etc.*] The sublimity with which the great Author of Nature is here characterised, is but the second beauty of this fine passage. The greatest is the making the very dispensation objected to, the periphrasis of his Title.

Better for Us, perhaps, it might appear,
Were there all harmony, all virtue here ;

165

COMMENTARY.

Ver. 165. *Better for us, etc*] But, secondly, to strengthen the foregoing *analogical* argument, and to make the wisdom and goodness of God still more apparent, he observes (from Ver. 164 to 173.) that *moral evil* is not only productive of *good* to the *Whole*, but is even productive of *good* in *our own System*. It might, says he, perhaps appear better to us, that there were nothing in this world but *peace* and *virtue* :

“That never air or ocean felt the wind ;

“That never passion discompos’d the mind.”

But then consider, that as our *material system* is supported by the strife of its elementary particles ; so is our *intellectual system* by the conflict of our passions, which are the elements of human action.

In a word, as without the benefit of tempestuous winds, both air and ocean would stagnate, corrupt, and spread universal contagion throughout all the ranks of animals that inhabit, or are supported by, them ; so, without the benefit of the Passions, such Virtue as was merely the effect of the absence of those Passions, would be a lifeless calm, a stoical Apathy.

“Contracted all, retiring to the breast :

“But health of mind is *Exercise*, not *Rest*.”

Epistle ii. Ver. 103:

Therefore, instead of regarding the conflicts of the elements, and the Passions of the mind as disorders, you ought to consider them as part of the *general order* of Providence : And that they are so, appears from their always preserving the same unvaried course, throughout all ages, from the creation to the present time :

“The *gen’ral Order*, since the Whole began,

“Is kept in *Nature*, and is kept in *Man*.”

We see therefore, it would be doing great injustice to our author to suspect that he intended, by this, to give any encouragement to vice. His system, as all his *Ethic Epistles* shew, is this : That the *Passions*, for the reasons given above, are necessary to the support of Virtue : That, indeed, the passions in excess, produce Vice, which is, in its own nature, the greatest of all evils, and comes into the world from the abuse of

That never air or ocean felt the wind;
 That never passion discompos'd the mind.
 But ALL subsists by elemental strife;
 And passions are the elements of Life.
 The gen'ral ORDER, since the whole began,
 Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.

170

VI What would this Man? Now upward will he soar,
 And little less than Angels, would be more;

COMMENTARY.

Man's free-will; but that God, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, deviously turns the natural bias of its malignity to the advancement of human happiness, and makes it productive of general Good:

"TH' ETERNAL ART EDUCES GOOD FROM ILL."

Epistle ii. Ver. 175.

This, set against what we have observed of the Poet's doctrine of a *future state*, will furnish us with an instance of his *steering* (as he well expresses it in his preface) *between doctrines seemingly opposite*; If his *Essay* has any merit, he thinks it is in this. And doubtless it is uncommon merit to reject the visions and absurdities of every System, and take in only what is rational and real

The CHARACTERISTICS and the FABLE OF THE BEES are two seemingly inconsistent systems; the folly of the first is in giving a scheme of *Virtue without Religion*; and the knavery of the latter, in giving a scheme of *Religion without Virtue*. These our Poet leaves to any that will take them up; but agrees however so far with the first, that "Virtue would be worth having, though itself was its only reward;" and so far with the latter, that God makes Evil "against its nature, productive of Good"

VER 173 *What would this Man? etc.*] Having thus justified Providence in its *permission* of partial MORAL EVIL, our Author employs the remaining part of his Epistle in vindicating it from the imputation of certain

NOTES.

VER 169. *But all subsists, etc.*] See this subject extended in Epistle ii. from Ver. 90 to 112, 155, etc.

VER. 174. *And little less than Angels, etc.*] *Thou hast made him a little lower than the Angels, and hast crown'd him with glory and honour.* Psalm viii. 9.

Now looking downwards, just as griev'd appears 175
 To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
 Made for his use all creatures if he call,
 Say, what their use, had he the pow'rs of all?
 Nature to these, without profusion, kind,
 The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd; 180
 Each seeming want compensated of course,
 Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;

COMMENTARY.

supposed NATURAL EVILS. For now he shews (from Ver. 172 to 207.) that though the complaint of his adversaries against Providence be on pretence of *real moral evils*; yet, at bottom, it all proceeds from their impatience under *imaginary natural ones*; the issue of a deprav'd appetite for visionary advantages, which if Man had, they would be either *useless* or *pernicious* to him, as repugnant to his state, or unsuitable to his condition. Though God (says he,) hath so bountifully bestowed on Man, Faculties little less than *angelic*, yet he ungratefully grasps at higher; and then, extravagant in another extreme, with a passion as ridiculous as that is impious, envies, as what would be advantages to himself, even the peculiar accommodations of *brutes*. But here his own false principles expose the folly of his falser appetites. He supposes them all made for his use. Now what use could he have of them, when he had robbed them of all their qualities? Qualities distributed with the highest wisdom, as they are divided at present; but which, if bestowed according to the sroward humour of these childish complainers, would be every where found to be either *wanting* or *superfluous*. But even though endowed with these brutal qualities, Man would not only be no gainer, but a considerable loser; as the Poet shews in explaining the consequences which would follow from his having his sensations in that exquisite degree, in which this or the other animal is observed to possess them.

NOTES.

VER. 182, *Here with degrees of swiftness, etc.*] It is a certain axiom in the anatomy of creatures, that in proportion as they are formed for strength, their swiftness is lessened; or as they are formed for swiftness, their strength is abated. P.

All in exact proportion to the state ;
 Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
 Each beast, each insect, happy in its own : 185
 Is Heav'n unkind to Man, and Man alone ?
 Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
 Be pleas'd with nothing, if not blest'd with all ?

The bliss of Man, (could Pride that blessing find)
 Is not to act or think beyond mankind ; 190

No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,
 But what his nature and his state can bear.
 Why has not Man a microscopic eye ?
 For this plain reason, Man is not a Fly.

Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n, 195
 T'inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n ?

Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
 To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore ?
 Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,
 Die of a rose in aromatic pain ? 200

If nature thunder'd in his opening ears,
 And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,
 How would he wish that Heav'n had left him still
 The whisp'ring Zephyr, and the purling rill ?
 Who finds not Providence all good and wise, 205
 Alike in what it gives, and what denies ?

VII. Far as Creation's ample range extends,
 The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends :

COMMENTARY

VER. 207. *Far as Creation's ample range extends,*] He tells us next (from Ver 206 to 233) that the complying with such extravagant desires would not only be useless and pernicious to Man, but would be breaking into the order, and deforming the beauty of God's Creation, in which *this* animal is subject to *that*, and every one to Man; who by his Reason enjoys the sum of all their powers.

NOTES.

VER. 202. *Stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,*] This instance is poetical and even sublime, but misplaced. He is arguing philosophically in a case that required him to employ the *real* objects of sense only : and, what is worse, he speaks of this as a *real* object — *If NATURE thunder'd*, etc. The case is different where (in Ver. 253.) he speaks of the motion of the

Mark how it mounts, to Man's imperial race,
 From the green myriads in the peopled grass : 210
 What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
 The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam :
 Of smell, the headlong lioness between,
 And hound sagacious on the tainted green :
 Of hearing from the life that fills the flood, 215
 To that which warbles through the vernal wood ?

NOTES.

heavenly bodies, under the sublime conception of *ruling Angels* : For whether there be *ruling Angels* or no, there is real *motion*, which was all his argument wanted ; but if there be no *music of the spheres*, there was no real *sound*, which his argument was obliged to find.

VER. 209 *Mark how it mounts, to Man's imperial race,*] M. Du Resnel has turned the latter part of the line thus,

"Jusqu' à l'Homme, ce chef, ce Roy de l'Univers."

"Even to man, this Head, this *King of the Universe*," which is so sad a blunder that it contradicts the Poet's peculiar System ; who, although he allows *Man* to be King of this inferior world, yet he thinks it madness to make him *King of the Universe*. If the philosophy and argument of the Poem could not teach him this, yet methinks the Poet's own words, in this very Epistle, might have prevented his mistake.

"So man, who here seems *Principal* alone,

"Perhaps acts *Second* to some sphere unknown."

If the Translator imagined that Mr. Pope was speaking ironically, where he talks of *Man's imperial race*, and so would heighten the ridicule of the original by *ce Roy de l'Univers*, the mistake is still worse ! for the force of the argument depends upon its being said seriously ; the Poet being here speaking of a scale from the highest to the lowest in the mundane System.

VER. 213 *The headlong lioness.*] The manner of the lions hunting their prey in the deserts of Africa is this : At their first going out in the night-time they set up a loud roar, and then listen to the noise made by the beasts in their flight, pursuing them by ear, and not by the nostril. It is probable the story of the jackal's laming for the lion, was occasioned by the observation of this defect of scent in that terrible animal. P.

The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine !
 Feels at each thread, and lives along the line :
 In the nice bee, what sense to subtly true
 From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew ? 210
 How Instinct varies in the grov'ling swine,
 Compar'd, half-reas'ning elephant with thine !
 Twixt that, and Reason, what a nice barrier ?
 For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near !
 Remembrance and Reflection how ally'd ; 225
 What thin partitions Sense from Thought divide ?
 And Middle natures, how they long to join,
 Yet never pass th'insuperable line !
 Without this just gradation, could they be
 Subjected, these to those, or all to thee ? 230
 The pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone,
 Is not thy Reason all these pow'rs in one ?

NOTES.

VER. 224. *For ever sep'rate, etc.*] *Near*, by the similitude of the operations ; *separate* by the immense difference in the nature of the powers.

VER. 226. *What thin partitions, etc.*] So *thin*, that the Atheistic Philosophers, as Protagoras, held that THOUGHT was only SENSE ; and from thence concluded, that every imagination or opinion of every man was true. Πᾶσα φαντασία ἐστὶ ἀληθής. But the Poet determines more philosophically ; that they are really and essentially different, how *thin* soever the partition be by which they are divided. Thus (to illustrate the truth of this observation) when a geometer considers a triangle, in order to demonstrate the equality of its three right ones, he has the picture or image of some sensible triangle in his mind which is *sense* ; yet notwithstanding, he must needs have the notion or idea of an intellectual triangle likewise, which is *thought* ; for this plain reason, because every image or picture of a triangle must needs be obtusangular, or rectangular, or acutangular ; but that which, in his mind, is the subject of his proposition, is the ratio of a triangle, undetermined to any of these species. On this account it was that Aristotle said Νοήματα τινὶ διόλου, τῇ μὲν φαντάσματά εἰναι, ἢ ὑδὲ τὰτα φαντάσματα, ἀλλ' ἐν αὐτοῖς φαντάσματος. The conceptions of the mind differ somewhat from sensible images ; they are not sensible images, and yet not quite free or disengaged from sensible images.

VIII See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth
 All matter quick, and bursting into birth
 Above, how high progressive life may go ! 235
 Around, how wide ! how deep extend below !
 Vast chain of Being ! which from God began,
 Nature's ethereal, human, angel, man,
 Beast bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
 No glass can reach ; from infinite to thee, 240
 From thee to Nothing.—On superior pow'rs
 Were we to press, inferior might on ours :
 Or in the full creation leave a void,
 Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd :
 From Nature's chain whatever link you strike, 245
 Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.

VARIATIONS.

VER. 238. Ed. 1st.

Ethereal essence, spirit, substance, Man.

COMMENTARY.

Ver. 233. *See, through this air. etc.*] And further (from Ver. 232 to 267) that this breaking the order of things, which, as a link or chain, connects all beings from the highest to the lowest would unavoidably be attended with the destruction of the Universe : For that the several parts of it must at least compose an entire and harmonious a Whole, as the parts of a human body, can be doubted of by no one : Yet we see what confusion it would make in our frame, if the members were set upon invading each other's office :

"What if the Foot," etc.

Who will not acknowledge, therefore, that a connection, in the disposition of things, so harmonious as here described, is transcendently beautiful ? But the Fatalists suppose such an one.—What then ? Is the first Free Agent, the great Cause of all things, debarred a contrivance infinitely exquisite, because some Men, to set up their idol, Fate, absurdly represent it as presiding over such a system ?

NOTES.

VER. 243. *Or in the full creation leave a void, etc.*] This is only an illustration from the Peripatetic *plenum* and *vacuum* : the *full* and *void* here meant, relating not to Matter, but to Life.

And, if each system in gradation roll
 Alike essential to th' amazing Whole,
 The least confusion but in one, not all
 That system only, but the whole must fall, 250
 Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
 Planets and stars rush lawless thro' the sky;
 Let ruling Angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
 Being on being wreck'd and world on world;
 Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod, 255
 And Nature trembles to the throne of God.
 All this dread ORDER break—for whom? for thee?
 Vile worm!—oh Madness! Pride! Impiety!
 IX. What if the foot ordain'd the dust to tread,
 Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head? 260
 What if the head, the eye, or ear rep'n'd
 To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
 Just as absurd for any part to claim
 To be another in this gen'ral frame:
 Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains,
 The great directing MIND OF ALL ordains. 265

NOTES.

VER. 247 *And, if each system in gradation roll*] The verb is exactly chosen, as not alluding to the *motion* of the planetary bodies, of each system; but to the *figures* described by that motion.

VER. 251. *Let Earth unbalanc'd,*] *i. e.* Being no longer kept within its orbit by the different directions of its progressive and attractive motions; which like equal weights in a balance, keep it in an equilibrium.

VER. 253. *Let ruling Angels, etc.*] The Poet, throughout this Work has with great art. used an advantage which his employing a *Platonic* principle for the foundation of his Essay, had afforded him; and that is the expressing himself (as here) in *Platonic* language; which luckily for his purpose, is highly poetical. at the same time that it adds a grace to the uniformity of his reasoning.

VER. 259. *What if the foot, etc.*] This fine illustration in defence of the *System of Nature*, is taken from *St. Paul*, who employed it to defend the *System of Grace*.

VER. 265. *Just as absurd, etc.*] See the prosecution and application of this in Ep. iv. P.

VER. 266. *The great directing Mind, etc.*] “Veneramus autem et colimus ob dominium. Deus enim sine

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
 Whose body nature is, and God the soul ;
 That, chan.'d through all, and yet in all the same ;
 Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame ;

270

COMMENTARY.

VER. 267 *All are but parts of one stupendous whole.*
 Our Author having thus given a representation of God's
 work, as *one entire whole*, where all the parts have a
 necessary dependance on and relation to each other,
 and where each particular part works and concurs to
 the perfection of the Whole ; as such a system trans-
 cends vulgar ideas ; to reconcile it to common con-
 ceptions, he shews (from Ver. 266 to 281) that God
 is equally and intimately present to every sort of
substance, to every particle of *matter* and in every
 instant of *being* ; which eases the labouring imagina-
 tion, and makes us expect no less, from such a *Presence*,
 than such a *Dispensation*

NOTES.

“ dominio, providentia, et causis finalibus, nihil aliud
 “ est quam FATUM et NATURA.” *Newtoni Princip.*
Schol. gener. sub finem.

VER. 268. *Whose body nature is, etc.*] Mr. de Croufaz
 remarks on this line, that “ A Spinozist would express
 “ himself in this Manner.” I believe he would ; for
 so the infamous Toland has done, in his *Atheist's Li-*
turgy call PANTHEISTICON : But so would St. Paul
 likewise, who, writing on this subject, the omnipre-
 sence of God in his Providence, and in his Substance,
 says in the words of a pantheistical Greek Poet, *In*
him we live and move, and have our being ; i. e. we are
 parts of him, *his offspring* : And the reason is, because
 a religious theist and an impious pantheist, both pro-
 fess to believe the omnipresence of God. But would
 Spinoza, as Mr. Pope does, call God *the great directing*
mind of all, who hath intentionally created a perfect
 Universe ? Or would a Spinozist have told us,

“ The workman from the work distinct was known ?”
 a line that overturns all Spinozism from its very foun-
 dations.

But this sublime description of the Godhead contains
 not only the *divinity* of St. Paul ; but if that will not
 satisfy the men he writes against, the *philosophy* like-
 wise of Sir Isaac Newton.

Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all Life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;

NOTES.

The Poet says,

- "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
- "Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
- "That, chang'd through all, and yet in all the same,
- "Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame,
- "Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
- "Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
- "Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
- "Spreads undivided, operates unspent."

The Philosopher:—"In ipso continentur et moventur
universa, sed absque mutua passione Deus nihil
patitur ex corporum motibus; illa nullam sentiunt
resistentiam ex omnipræsentia Dei—Corpore omni
et figura corporea destituitur.—Omnia regit et omnia
cognoscit.—Cum unaquæque Spatii particula sit
semper, et unumquodque Durationis indivisibile mo-
mentum, ubique certe rerum omnium Fabricator ac
Dominus non erit nunquam, nusquam."

Mr. Pope;

- "Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
- "As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart:
- "As full, as perfect, in vile Man that mourns,
- "As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns:
- "To him, no high, no low, no great, no small;
- "He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all."

Sir Isaac Newton:—"Annon ex phænomenis constat
esse entem incorporeum, viventem, intelligentem,
omnipræsentem, qui in spatio infinito, tanquam
sensorio suo, res ipsas intime cernat, penitusque per-
spiciat, totasque intra se præsens præsentibus com-
plectatur."

But now admitting, there were an ambiguity in
these expressions, so great that a Spinozist might em-
ploy them to express his own particular principles;
and such a thing might well be, because the Spinozists,
in order to hide the impiety of their principle, are
wont to express the Omnipresence of God in terms
that any religious Theist might employ; in this case,
I say how are we to judge of the Poet's meaning?
Surely by the whole tenor of his argument. Now
take the words in the sense of the Spinozists, and he

Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
 As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
 As full, as perfect, in vile Man that mourns,
 As the rapt Seraph, that adores and burns:

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is made, in the conclusion of his epistle, to overthrow all he had been advancing throughout the body of it. For Spinozism is the destruction of an Universe, where every thing tends, by a foreseen contrivance in all its parts, to the perfection of the Whole. But allow him to employ the passage in the sense of St. Paul, *That we and all creatures live, and move, and have our being in God*; and then it will be seen to be the most logical support of all that had preceded. For the Poet, having as we say, laboured through his epistle to prove, that every thing in the Universe tends, by a foreseen contrivance, and a present direction of all its parts, to the perfection of the Whole; it might be objected, that such a disposition of things implying in God a painful, operose, and inconceivable extent of Providence, it could not be supposed that such care extended to *all*, but was confined to the more noble parts of the creation. This gross conception of the First Cause the Poet exposes, by shewing that God is equally and intimately present to every particle of Matter, to every sort of Substance, and in every instant of Being.

VER. 277. *As full, as perfect, in vile Man that mourns,
 As the rapt Seraph, that adores and burns:*]

Which M. Du Resnel translates thus,

“ Dans un homme ignoré sous une humble Chaumière,

“ Que dans le Seraphin, rayonnant de lumière.

i. e. *As well in the ignorant man, who inhabits an humble cottage, as in the Seraphim encompassed with rays of light.* The Translator in good earnest thought, that a *vile man that mourn'd* could be no other than some poor Country Cottager. Which has betrayed M. De Crousaz into this important remark.—“ For all that, “ we sometimes find in persons of the lowest rank, a “ fund of probity and resignation which preserves “ them from contempt; their minds are, indeed, but “ narrow, yet fitted to their station,” etc. *Comm. p. 120.* But Mr. Pope had no such childish idea in his head. He was here opposing the human species to

to him no high, no low, no great, no small ;
 he fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.

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X. Cease then, nor ORDER Imperfection name :
 nor proper bliss depends on what we blame.

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 282, in the MS.

Reason, to think of God when she pretends,
 Begins a Censor, an Adorer ends.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 281. *Cease then, nor Order Imperfection name :*
 and now the Poet, as he had promised, having *vindi-*
cated the ways of God to Man, concludes (from Ver. 280,
 the end) that, from what had been said, it appears,
 that the very things we blame, contribute to our
 happiness, either as unrelated particulars, or at least
 parts of the universal system; that our state of
 ignorance was allotted to us out of compassion; that
 yet we have as much knowledge as is sufficient to
 show us, that we are, and always shall be, as blest as
 we can bear; for that NATURE is neither a *Stratonic*
 chain of blind Causes and Effects,

(All Nature is but Art unknown to thee)

nor yet the fortuitous result of *Epicurean* Atoms,

(All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see)

those two species of atheism supposed it; but the
 wonderful art and contrivance, unknown indeed to
 man, of an all-powerful, all-wise, all good, and free
 Being. And therefore we may be assured, that the
 arguments brought above, to prove partial moral evil
 productive of Good, are conclusive; from whence
 the certain truth results, in spite of all the pride and
 evils of vain Reason, That **WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.**

That the reader may see in one view the exactness
 of the Method, as well as force of the Argument, I
 shall here draw up a short synopsis of this Epistle. The
 Poet begins by telling us his subject is an Essay on Man:
 that his end of writing is to *vindicate Providence*: That

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the angelic; and so spoke of the first, when com-
 pared to the latter, as *vile and disconsolate*. The force
 and beauty of the reflection depend upon this sense;
 and what is more, the propriety of it.

VER. 278. *As the rapt Seraph, etc*] Alluding to the
 same *Seraphim*, signifying burners.

Know thy own point : This kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.

COMMENTARY.

he intends to derive his arguments from the *wisdom* things of God seen in this system : Lays down this Proposition, *That of all possible systems, infinite Wisdom has formed the best* : draws from thence two Consequences
1. *That there must needs be somewhere such a creature as Man* ; 2. *That the moral Evil which he is author of, is productive of the Good of the Whole.* This is his general Thesis ; from whence he forms this Conclusion, *That Man should rest submissive and content, and make the hope of Futurity his comfort ; but not suffer this to be the occasion of PRIDE, which is the cause of all his impious complaints.*

He proceeds to confirm his Thesis—Previously endeavours to abate our wonder at the phenomenon of *moral Evil* ; shews, first, *its use to the perfection of the universe*, by analogy, from the use of *physical Evil* in this particular system—Secondly, *its use in this system* where it is turned providentially, from its natural bias to promote Virtue. Then goes on to vindicate Providence from the imputation of certain *supposed natural Evils* ; as he had before justified it for the permission of *real moral Evil*, in shewing that, though the Atheist's complaint against Providence be on pretence of *moral Evil*, yet the true cause is his impatience under *imaginary natural Evil* ; the issue of a *depraved appetite for fantastical advantages* which if obtained, would be *useless or hurtful to Man* and *deforming of, and destructive to the Universe*, as breaking into that order by which it is supported.—He describes that *order, harmony, and close connection of the parts* ; and shewing the intimate presence of God to his whole creation, gives a reason for an Universe so amazingly beautiful and perfect. From all this he deduces a general conclusion, *That Nature being neither a blind chain of Causes and Effects, nor yet the fortuitous result of wandering atoms but the wonderful art and direction of an all wise, all-good, and free Being ; WHATSOEVER IS, IS RIGHT, with regard to the disposition of God, and its ultimate tendency ; which once granted, all complaints against Providence are at an end.*

Submit. — In this, or any other sphere,
 Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear :
 Safe in the hand of one disposing Pow'r,
 Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
 All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee ;
 All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see ;
 All Discord, Harmony not understood ; 291
 All partial Evil, universal Good :
 And spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,
 One truth is clear, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.

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VER. 294. *One truth is clear, etc.*] It will be difficult to think any caviller should have objected to this conclusion ; especially when the Author, in this very epistle, has himself thus explained it.

- " Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,
- " *May, must* be right, as relative to ALL. —
- " So Man, who here seems *principal* alone,
- " Perhaps acts *second* to some sphere unknown ;
- " Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal :
- " 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole."

But without any regard to the evidence of this illustration, M. de Crousaz exclaims : " See the general conclusion, *All that is, is right*. So that at the sight of Charles the First losing his head on the scaffold, we must have said, *this is right* ; at the sight too of his judges condemning him, we must have said, *this is right* ; at the sight of some of these judges, taken and condemned for the action which he had owned to be right, we must have cried out, *this is doubly right*." Never was any thing more amazing than that the absurdities arising from the sense in which this critic takes the great principle, of *whatever is, is right*, did not shew him his mistake : For could any one in his senses employ a proposition in a meaning from whence such evident absurdities *immediately* arise ? I have observed, that this conclusion, *whatever is, is right*, is a consequence of these premises, that *partial Evil tends to universal Good*, which the Author employs as a principle to humble the pride of Man, who would impiously make God accountable for his creation. What then does common sense teach us to understand by *whatever is, is right* ? Did the Poet mean right

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with regard to Man, or right with regard to God ; right with regard to itself, or right with regard to its ultimate tendency ? Surely, WITH REGARD TO GOD ; for he tells us his design is to *vindicate the ways of God to Man*. Surely with regard to its ULTIMATE TENDENCY ; for he tells us again, *all partial ill is universal Good*, Ver. 291. Now is this any encouragement to Vice ? Or does it take off from the crime of him who commits it, that God providentially produces Good out of Evil ? Had Mr. Pope abruptly said in his conclusion, *the result of all is, that whatever is, is right*, the objector had even then been inexcusable for putting so absurd a sense upon the words, when he might have seen that it was a conclusion from the general principle above-mentioned ; and therefore must necessarily have another meaning. But what must we think of him, when the Poet, to prevent mistakes, had delivered in this very place, the principle itself, together with the conclusion as this consequence of it ?

“ All Discord, Harmony not understood ;

“ *All partial Evil, universal Good :*

“ And, spite of Pride, in erring Reason’s spite,

“ One truth is clear,—*Whatever Is, is Right.*”

He could not have told his Reader plainer, that his conclusion was the consequence of that principle, unless he had written THEREFORE in great Church letters.

 ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE II.

*Of the Nature and State of Man, with
Respect to Himself as an Individual.*

I. **T**HE business of Man is not to pry into God, but to study himself. His Middle Nature; his Powers and Frailties, Ver. 1 to 19. The Limits of his Capacity, Ver. 19, etc. II. The two Principles of Man, Self love and Reason, both necessary, Ver. 53, etc. Self-love the stronger, and why, Ver. 67, etc. Their End the same, Ver. 81, etc. III. The PASSIONS, and their Use, Ver. 93 to 130. The Predominant Passion, and its force, Ver. 132 to 160. Its Necessity, in directing Men to different Purposes, Ver. 165, etc. Its providential Use, in fixing our Principle, and ascertaining our Virtue, Ver. 177. IV. Virtue and Vice joined in our mixed Nature; the limits near, yet the Things separate and evident: What is the Office of Reason, Ver. 202 to 216. V. How odious Vice in itself, and how we deceive ourselves in it, Ver. 217. VI. That, however, the Ends of Providence and general Good are answered in our Passions and Imperfections, Ver. 238, etc. How usefully these are distributed to all Orders of Men, Ver. 241. How useful they are to Society, Ver. 251. And to Individuals, Ver. 263. In every state, and every age of Life, Ver. 273, etc.

E P I S T L E II.

- I. **K** NOW then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of Mankind is Man.

V A R I A T I O N S.

VER. 2. Ed. 1st. The only science of Mankind is Man.

C O M M E N T A R Y.

VER. 2. *The proper study, etc.*] The Poet having shewn, in his *first* epistle, that the *ways of God* are too high for our comprehension, rightly draws this conclusion: and methodically makes it the subject of his Introduction to the *second*, which treats of the *Nature of Man*.

But here presently the accusers of Providence would be apt to object and say, "Admit that we ran into an excess, when we pretended to censure or penetrate the designs of Providence, a matter, perhaps, too high for us; yet have not you gone as far into the opposite extreme, while you only send us to the knowledge of OURSELVES: You must mock us when you talk of this as a study; for who can doubt but we are intimately acquainted with our own Nature? The proper conclusion therefore from your proof of our inability to comprehend the ways of God, is that we should turn ourselves to the study of the frame of general NATURE." Thus, I say, would they be apt to object; for of all Men, those who call themselves *Freethinkers* are most given up to *Pride*; especially to that kind which consists in a boasted knowledge of Man, the effects of which pride are so well exposed in the *first* Epistle: The Poet, therefore, to convince them that this study is less easy than they imagine, replies (from Ver. 2 to 19.) to the *first* part of the objection, by describing the dark and feeble state of the human Understanding, with regard to the knowledge of ourselves. And further to strengthen this argument, he shews, in answer to the *second* part of the objection (from Ver. 18 to 31.) that the highest advances in *natural knowledge* may be easily acquired, and yet we all the while, continue very ignorant of *ourselves*. For that neither the clearest science, which results from the Newtonian

Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
A Being darkly wise, and rudely great:

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COMMENTARY.

philosophy, nor the most sublime, which is taught by the Platonic, will at all assist us in this self-study; nay, what is more, that Religion itself, when grown fanatical and enthusiastic, will be equally useless: Though pure and sober Religion will best instruct us in Man's Nature; that knowledge being necessary to Religion; whose subject is Man considered in all his relations, and consequently, whose object is God.

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VER. 3. *Plac'd on this isthmus, etc.*] As the Poet hath given us this sublime description of Man for the very contrary purpose to what *Sceptics* are wont to employ such kind of paintings, namely, not to deter men from the search, but to excite them to the discovery of truth; he hath, with great judgment, represented Man as doubting and wavering between the *right* and *wrong* object; from which state it is allowable to hope he may be relieved by a careful and circumspect use of Reason. On the contrary, had he supposed Man so blind as to be busied in chusing, or doubtful in his choice, between two objects *equally wrong*, the case had appeared desperate, and all *study of Man* had been effectually discouraged. But M. Du Resnal, not seeing the reason and beauty of this conduct, hath run into the very absurdity, which I have here shewn Mr. Pope so artfully avoided. Of which the learned Reader may take the following proofs. The Poet says,

"Man hangs between; in doubt to *act*, or *rest*."

Now he tells us it is Man's duty to *act*, not *rest*, as the Stoics thought; and, to this their principle, the latter word alludes, whose Virtue, as he says afterwards, is

—————"fix'd as in a Frost,

"Contracted all, retiring to the breast:

"But strength of mind is *EXERCISE*, not *REST*."

Now hear the Translator, who is not for mincing matters;

"Seroit-il en naissant au travail condamné ?

"Aux douceurs, du repos seroit-il destiné ?

e. They are both wrong, for Man is, neither condemned to *stavish Toil* and *Labour*, nor yet indulged in the *Luxury of Repose*.

With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,
 With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
 He hangs between ; in doubt to act, or rest ;
 In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast ;
 In doubt his Mind or Body to prefer ;
 Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err ;

NOTES.

The Poet says,

" In doubt to deem himself a God or Beast."

i. e. He doubts, as appears from the very next line, whether his soul be *mortal* or *immortal* ; one of which is the truth, namely, its *immortality*, as the Poet himself teaches, when he speaks of the omnipresence of God :

" Breathes in our Soul, informs our mortal part."

Ep i Ver. 275.

The Translator, as we say, unconscious of the Poet's purpose, rambles as before,

" Tantôt de son esprit admirant l'excellence,

" Il pense qu'il est Dieu, qu'il en a la puissance ;

" Et tantôt gemissant des besoins de son corps,

" Il croit que de la brute, il n'a que les RESORTS."

Here his head, turned to a sceptical view, was running on the different extravagances of Plato in his Theology, and of Des Cartes in his Physiology. Sometimes, says he, Man believes himself a *real God* ; and sometimes again, a *mere machine* : things quite out of the Poet's thought in this place. Again, the Poet in a beautiful allusion to Scripture sentiments, breaks out into this just and moral reflection of Man's condition here,

" Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err."

The Translator turns this fine and sober thought into the most outrageous Scepticism ;

" Ce n'est que pour mourir, qu'il né, qui'il respire,

" Et toute sa raison n'est presque qu'un delire."

and so makes his Author directly contradict himself, where he says of Man that he hath

—" too much knowledge for the Sceptic side."

VER. 10. *Born but to die, etc.*] The Author's meaning is, that as we are *born to die*, and yet do enjoy some small portion of life ; so, though we *reason to err*, yet we comprehend some few truths. This is the weak state of Reason, in which Error mixes itself with all its true conclusions concerning Man's Nature.

Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much :
Chaos of Thought and Passion, all confus'd ;
Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd ;
Created half to rise, and half to fall ;
Great Lord of all things, yet a prey to all ;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd :
The Glory, jest, and riddle of the world !

15

V A R I A T I O N S.

After VER. 18. in the MS.

For more perfection than this state can bear,
In vain we sigh, Heav'n made us as we are.
As wisely sure a modest Ape might aim
To be like Man, whose faculties and frame
He sees, he feels, as you or I to be
An Angel thing we neither know nor see.

N O T E S.

VER. 11. *Alike in ignorance, etc.*] *i. e.* The proper sphere of his Reason is so narrow, and the exercise of it so nice, that the too immoderate use of it is attended with the same ignorance that proceeds from the not using it at all. Yet, though in both these cases, he is *abused by himself*, he has it still in his own power to *disabuse himself*, in making his Passions subservient to the *means*, and regulating his Reason by the *end* of life.

VER. 12. *Whether he thinks too little or too much :*] It is so true, that ignorance arises as well from pushing our enquiries too far, as from not carrying them far enough, that we may observe, when Speculations, even in Science, are carried beyond a certain point ; that point, where use is reasonably supposed to end, and mere curiosity to begin ; they conclude in the most extravagant and senseless inferences ; such as the unreality of matter ; the reality of space ; the servility of the Will, *etc.* The cause of this sudden fall out of full light into utter darkness, seems not to arise from the natural condition of things, but to be the arbitrary decree of infinite wisdom and goodness, which imposed a barrier to the extravagancies of its giddy lawless creatures, always inclined to pursue truths of less importance too far, and to neglect those which are more necessary for his improvement in his station here.

VER. 17. *Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd :*] Some have imagined that the Author, by, *in endless*

Go, wond'rous creature! mount where Science guides,
Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides; 20

VARIATIONS.

Observe how near he edges on our race;
What human tricks! how risible of face!
It must be so—why else have I the sense
Of more than monkey charms and excellence?
Why else to walk on two so oft essay'd?
And why this ardent longing for a Maid?
So Pug might plead, and call his Gods unkind,
Till set on end and married to his mind.
Go, reasoning thing! assume the Doctor's chair,
As Plato deep, as Seneca severe;
Fix moral fitness, and to God give rule,
Then drop into thyself, etc.—

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error hurl'd, meant, *cast into endless error*, or, *into the regions of endless error*, and therefore have taken notice of it as an incongruity of speech. But they neither understood the Poet's language, nor his sense: to *hurl* and *cast* are not synonymous; but related only as the genus and species; for to *hurl* signifies not simply to *cast*, but to *cast backward and forward*, and is taken from the rural game called *hurling*. So that, *into endless error hurl'd*, as these critics would have it, would have been barbarism. His words therefore signify *tossed about in endless error*; and this he intended they should signify, as appears from the antithesis, *sole judge of truth*. So that the sense of the whole is,—“Though, as sole judge of truth, he is now fixed and stable; yet, as involved in *endless error*, he is now again *hurl'd*, or tossed up and down in it.” This shews us how cautious we ought to be in censuring the expressions of a Writer, one of whose characteristic talents was correctness of expression and propriety of sentiment.

VER. 20. *Go, measure earth, etc*] Alluding to the noble and useful labours of the modern Mathematicians, in measuring a degree at the equator and the polar Circle, in order to determine the true figure of the earth; of great importance to astronomy and navigation; and which proved of equal honour to the wonderful sagacity of Newton.

instruct the planets in what orbs to run,
 Correct old Time, and regulate the Sun ;
 Go, soar with Plato, to th' empyreal sphere,
 To the first good, first perfect, and first fair ;
 Or tread the mazy round his follow'rs trod,
 And quitting sense call imitating God ;
 As Eastern priests in giddy circles run,
 And turn their heads to imitate the Sun.
 Go, teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule—
 Then drop into thyself, and be a fool !

25

30

Superior beings, when of late they saw
 A mortal Man unfold all Nature's law.

VARIATIONS.

VER. 21. Ed. 4th and 5th.

Shew by what rules the wand'ring planets stray, &
 Correct old Time, and teach the Sun his way.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 31. *Superior beings, etc.*] To give this second argument its full force, he illustrates it (from Ver. 30 to 43) by the noblest example that ever was in science, the incomparable NEWTON ; who although he penetrated so far beyond others into the works of GOD, yet could go no farther in the knowledge of his own nature than the generality of his fellows. Of which the Poet assigns this very just and adequate reason : In

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VER. 22. *Correct old Time, etc.*] This alludes to Newton's Grecian Chronology, which he reformed on those two sublime conceptions. the difference between the reigns of kings, and the generation of men ; and the position of the colures of the equinoxes and solstices at the time of the Argonautic expedition.

VER. 29. 30. *Go, teach Eternal Wisdom, etc.*] These two lines are a conclusion from all that had been said from Ver. 18. to this effect : Go now, vain Man, elated with thy acquirements in *real* science and *imaginary* intimacy with God ; go, and run into all the extravagancies I have exploded in the first epistle, where thou pretendest to teach Providence how to govern ; then drop into the obscurities of thy own nature, and thereby manifest thy ignorance and folly.

VER. 31. *Superior beings, etc.*] In these lines the Poet speaks to this effect : " But to make you fully

Admir'd such wisdom in an earthly shape,
And shew'd a NEWTON as we shew an Ape.

COMMENTARY.

all other sciences the Understanding is unchecked and uncontrouled by any opposite principle; but in the science of *Man*, the Passions overturn as fast as Reason can build up.

NOTES.

sensible of the difficulty of this study, I shall instance in the great Newton himself; whom, when superior beings, not long since, saw capable of unfolding the whole law of Nature, they were in doubt whether the owner of such prodigious sagacity should not be reckoned of their order; just as men, when they see the surprising marks of Reason in an Ape, are almost tempted to rank him with their own kind." And yet this wondrous Man could go no further in the knowledge of himself than the generality of his species. M. Du Resnal, who understood nothing of all this, translates these four celebrated lines thus,

"Des celestes Esprits la vive intelligence

"Regarde avec pitié notre faible Science;

"Newton, le grand Newton, que nos admirons tous

"Est peut-être pour eux, ce qu'un Singe est pour nous."

But it is not the *pity* but the *admiration* of those celestial Spirits which is here spoken of. And it was for no slight cause they admired; it was, *to see a mortal Man unfold the whole law of Nature*. By which we see, it was not Mr. Pope's intention to bring any of the Ape's *qualities*, but his *sagacity*, into the comparison. But why the Ape's, it may be said, rather than the sagacity of some more decent animal, particularly the *half-reasoning elephant*, as the Poet calls it; which as well on account of this its excellence, as for its having no ridiculous side, like the Ape, on which it could be viewed seems better to have deserved this honour? I reply, Because, as a shape resembling human (which only the Ape has) must be joined with great sagacity, to raise a suspicion that the animal; thus endowed, is related to man: so the spirituality which Newton had in common with Angels, joined to a penetration superior to Man, made those Beings suspect he might be one of their order. On this ground of relation, we see the

Could he, whose rules the rapid Comet bind,
Describe or fix one movement of his Mind? 35

VARIATIONS.

VER. 35. Ed. 1st.

Could he, who taught each Planet where to roll,
Describe or fix one movement of the Soul?
Who mark'd their points to rise or to descend,
Explain his own beginning, or his end?

NOTES.

Whole beauty of the thought depends.—And here let
us take notice of a new species of the sublime, of
which our Poet may be justly said to be the Maker: so
few, that we have yet no name for it, though of a
nature distinct from every other known beauty of Po-
etry. The two great perfections in works of genius,
are WIT and SUBLIMITY. Many writers have been
witty; some have been sublime; and a few have
even possessed both these qualities separately: but none
that I know of, besides our Poet, hath had the art to
INCORPORATE them; of which he hath given many
examples, both in this Essay, and his other poems; one
of the noblest being the passage in question. This seems
to be the last effort of the imagination to poetical per-
fection: and in this compounded excellence, the Wit
receives a dignity from the Sublime, and the Sublime
splendor from the Wit; which in their State of
separate existence, they neither of them had. Yet a
late Critic, who writes with the decision of a Lord
of Session on Parnassus, thinks otherwise: "It may
be gathered, says he, from what is said above, that
wit and ridicule make not an agreeable mixture with
grandeur. Dissimilar emotions have a fine effect in
a slow succession; but in a rapid succession which
approaches to co-existence, they will not be re-
lished*. What pity is it, that the Poet should here
confute the Critic by DOING what the Critic, with
his rules, teaches us cannot be done! Boileau, who
was both Poet and Critic, had a clear view of this
excellence in idea; while the mere Critic, had no
idea of what he might clearly see before his eyes.

"ON PEUT-ETRE A LA FOIS ET POMPEUX ET PLAIS-
SANT;

Et je hais un SUBLIME ennuyeux et pesant."

* *Elements of Criticism*, Vol. i. p. 377.

Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,
 Explain his own beginning, or his end?
 Alas what wonder! Man's superior part
 Uncheck'd may rise, and climb from art to art :
 But when his own great work is but begun,
 What Reason weaves, by Passion is undone.
 Trace Science then, with Modesty thy guide.
 First strip off all her equipage of Pride :

COMMENTARY.

VER. 43. *Trace Science then, etc.*] The conclusion therefore, from the whole is (from Ver. 42 to 53) that as on the one hand we should persist in the study of Nature; so, on the other, in order to arrive at Science we should proceed in the simplicity of truth; and then the produce, though small, will yet be real.

NOTES.

VER. 37. *Who saw its fires here rise, etc.*] Sir Isaac Newton, in calculating the velocity of a Comet's motion, and the course it describes, when it becomes visible in its descent to, and ascent from the Sun, conjectured with the highest appearance of truth, that Comets revolve perpetually round the Sun, in ellipses vastly eccentric, and very nearly approaching to parabolas. In which he was greatly confirmed, in observing between two Comets a coincidence in their perihelions, and a perfect agreement in their velocities.—These matters have occasioned a pleasant conceit in the Author of *Elements of Criticism*, where for some reason or other he enters upon the nature and effects of Motion, and observes, “that regular motion is preferred; witness (says he) the motion of the Planets in orbits nearly circular; the motion of the Comets in orbits less regular is less agreeable.” Now not to quarrel with him about the more or less regularity of different Ellipses; the pleasantry of the conceit is this, that speaking of the pleasures of the imagination arising from different motions, he illustrates his point by motions which do not fall under the observation of sense at all. For the Comets and Planets are visible, yet the orbits in which they move being invisible, their motion appears equally regular or irregular.

educt what is but Vanity, or Dress, 45
 or Learning's Luxury, or Idleness;
 or tricks to shew the stretch of human brain,
 Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain;
 Expunge the whole, or lop th' excrescent parts
 Of all our Vices have created Arts; 50

NOTES.

VER. 45.—*Vanity, or Dress,*] These are the first parts of what the Poet, in the preceding line, calls the scholar's *equipage of Pride*. By *vanity* is meant that luxuriancy of thought and expression in which a Writer indulges himself, to shew the fruitfulness of his fancy or invention. By *dress*, is to be understood a lower degree of that practice, in amplification of thought and ornamental expression, to give force to what the Writer would convey: but even this, the Poet, in a severe search after truth, condemns, and with great judgment. Conciseness of thought and simplicity of expression, being as well the best *instruments*, as the best *vehicles* of Truth. *Shakespear* touches upon this latter advantage with great force and humour. The Flatterer says to *Timon* in distress, "I cannot cover the monstrous bulk of their ingratitude with any size of words." The other replies, "Let it go naked; men may see't the better."

VER. 46. *Or Learning's Luxury, or Idleness;*] The *Luxury of Learning* consists in dressing up and disguising old notions in a new way, so as to make them more fashionable and palatable; instead of examining and scrutinizing their truth. As this is often done for pomp and shew, it is called *luxury*; as it is often done too to save pains and labour, it is called *idleness*.

VER. 47. *Or tricks to shew the stretch of human brain,*] Such as the mathematical demonstrations concerning the *small quantity of matter*; the *endless divisibility* of it, etc.

VER. 48. *Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain;*] i. e. when *Admiration* has set the mind on the rack.

VER. 49. *Expunge the whole, or lop th' excrescent parts Of all our Vices have created Arts;*]

i. e. Those parts of natural Philosophy, Logic, Rhetoric, Poetry, etc. which administer to luxury, deceit, ambition, effeminacy, etc.

Then see how little the remaining sum,
Which serv'd the past, and must the times to come!

II. Two Principles in human nature reign:
Self-love, to urge, and Reason, to restrain;
Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call,
Each works its end, to move or govern all:
And to their proper operation still,
Ascribe all Good; to their improper, Ill.

Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul;
Reason's comparing balance rules the whole.
Man, but for that, no action could attend,
And, but for this, were active to no end:
Fix'd like a plant on his peculiar spot,
To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot;

COMMENTARY.

VER. 53. *Two Principles, etc.*] The Poet having thus shewn the difficulty which attends the study of Man, proceeds to remove it, by laying before us the elements or true principles of this science, in an account of the *origin, use, and end* of the PASSIONS; which in my opinion, contains the truest, clearest, shortest and consequently the best system of Ethics, that is any where to be met with. He begins (from Ver. 52 to 59) with pointing out the two grand Principles in human nature, SELF-LOVE and REASON. Describes their general nature: The first sets Man upon acting, the other regulates his action. However, these principles are *natural*, not *moral*; and therefore, in themselves neither good nor evil, but so, only as they are directed. This observation is made with great judgment, in opposition to the desperate folly of those Fanatics, who, as the Ascetic, vainly pretend to eradicate Self-love; or, as the Mystic, are more successful in stifling Reason; and both, on the absurd fancy of their being *moral*, not *natural*, principles.

VER. 59. *Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul;* The Poet proceeds (from Ver. 58 to 67.) more minutely to mark out the distinct offices of these two Principles, which offices he had before assigned only in general; and here he shews their necessity; for without Self-love, as the *spring*, Man would be inactive; and without Reason, as the *balance*, active to no purpose.

r meteor-like, flame lawless through the void, 65
 destroying others, by himself destroy'd.
 Most strength the moving principle requires:
 tive its talk, it prompts, impels, inspires.
 edate and quiet, the comparing lies,
 orm'd but to check, deliberate, and advise; 70
 elf-love still stronger, as its object's nigh
 eason's at distance, and in prospect lie:
 hat sees immediate good by present sense;
 eason, the future and the consequence.
 thicker than arguments, temptations throng; 75
 t best more watchful this, but that more strong,
 The action of the stronger to suspend
 eason still use, to Reason still attend.
 attention, habit and experience gains;
 ach strengthens Reason, and Self-love restrains. 80

COMMENTARY.

VER. 67. *Most strength the moving principle requires.*
 Having thus explained the ends and offices of each Principle, he goes on (from Ver. 65 to 79) to speak of their qualities; and shews how they are fitted to discharge those functions, and answer their respective intentions. The business of Self-love being to excite to action, it is quick and impetuous; and moving instinctively, has, like attraction, its force prodigiously increased, as the object approaches, and proportionally lessened as it recedes. On the contrary, Reason, like the Author of attraction, is always calm and medate and equally preserves itself, whether the object be near or far off. Hence the moving principle is made more strong, though the restraining be more quick sighted. The consequence he draws from this is, that if we would not be carried away to our destruction, we must always keep Reason upon guard.

VER. 79. *Attention, etc*] But it would be objected, that, if this account be true, human life would be most miserable; and even in the wisest, a perpetual conflict between Reason and the Passions. To this, therefore, the Poet replies (from Ver. 78 to 81.) first,

NOTES.

VER 74. *Reason, the future and the consequence.*
 i. e. By experience, Reason collects the future; and by argumentation, the consequence.

Let subtle schoolmen teach these friends to fight,
 More studious to divide than to unite;
 And Grace and Virtue, Sense and Reason split,
 With all the rash dexterity of wit.

COMMENTARY.

that Providence has so graciously contrived, that even in the voluntary exercise of Reason, as in the mechanic motion of a limb, Habit makes what was at first done with pain, easy and natural. And secondly, that the experience gained by the long exercise of Reason, goes a great way towards eluding the force of Self love. Now the attending to Reason, as here recommended, will gain us this habit and experience. Hence it appears, that our station, in which Reason is to be kept constantly upon guard, is not so uneasy as one as may be at first imagined.

VER. 81. *Let subtle schoolmen, etc.*] From this description of Self-love and Reason it follows, as the Poet observes (from Ver. 80 to 93) that both conspire to one end, namely, human happiness, though they be not equally expert in the choice of the means; the difference being this, that the first hastily seizes every thing which hath the appearance of good; the other weighs and examines whether it be indeed what it appears.

This shews, as he next observes, the folly of the schoolmen, who consider them as two opposite principles, the one good and the other evil. The observation is seasonable and judicious; for this dangerous school-opinion gives great support to the Manichean or Zoroastrian error, the confutation of which, was one of the Author's chief ends in writing. For if there be *two principles* in Man, a *good* and *evil*, it is natural to think him the joint product of the two Manichean Deities (the first of which contributed to his *Reason*, the other to his *Passions*) rather than the creature of one Individual Cause. This was Plutarch's opinion, and as we may see in him, of some of the more ancient theistical Philosophers. It was of importance, therefore, to reprobate and subvert a notion that served to the support of so dangerous an error: And this the Poet hath done with much force and clearness.

its, just like Fools, at war about a name,
 have full as oft no meaning, or the same.
 Self-love and Reason to one end aspire,
 gain their aversion, Pleasure their desire ;
 That greedy That, its object would devour,
 his taste the honey, and not wound the flow'r : 90
 Pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood,
 our greatest evil, or our greatest good
 III. Modes of Self love the Passions we may call :
 'tis real good, or seeming, moves them all :
 But since not every good we can divide, 95
 and reason bids us for our own provide ;
 Passions, tho' selfish, if their means be fair,
 list under Reason, and deserve her care ;
 those, that imparted, court a nobler aim,
 exalt their kind, and take some Virtue's name. 100
 In lazy apathy let Stoics boast
 their virtue fix'd ; 'tis fix'd as in a frost :

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 86, in the MS.

Of good and evil Gods what frighted Fools,
 Of good and evil Reason puzzled schools,
 Deceiv'd, deceiving, taught—

COMMENTARY.

VER. 93. *Modes of Self-love, etc.*] Having given this account of the nature of Self-love in general, he comes now to anatomize it, in a discourse on the PASSIONS, which he aptly names the MODES OF SELF-LOVE. The object of all these, he shews (from Ver. 92 to 101.) is *good*; and, when under the guidance of Reason, *real good*, either of ourselves or of another; for some goods not being capable of division, or communication, and Reason at the same time directing us to provide for ourselves, we therefore, in pursuit of these objects, sometimes aim at our own good, sometimes at the good of others: when fairly aiming at our own the quality is called *Prudence*; when at another's, *Virtue*.

Hence (as he shews from Ver. 100 to 105) appears the folly of the Stoics, who would eradicate the Passions things, so necessary both to the good of the Individual and of the Kind. Which preposterous method of promoting Virtue, he therefore very reasonably reproves.

Contracted all, retiring to the breast;
 But strength of mind is Exercise, not Rest:
 The rising tempest puts in act the soul,
 Parts it may ravage, but preserves the whole.
 On life's vast ocean diversely we sail,
 Reason the card, but Passion is the gale;
 Nor God alone in the still calm we find,
 He mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind.

VARIATIONS.

After VER. 108, in the MS.

A tedious Voyage! where how useless lies
 The Compass, if no powerful gusts arise?

COMMENTARY.

VER. 105. *The rising tempest puts in act the soul*
 But as it was from observation of the evils occasioned
 by the passions, that the Stoics thus extravagantly
 projected their extirpation, the Poet recurs (from Ver.
 104 to 111) to his grand principle so often before, and
 to so good purpose. insisted on, that *partial Ill is un-*
iversal Good; and shews, that though the tempest of
 the Passions, like that of the air, may tear and ravage
 some few parts of nature in its passage, yet the salutary
 agitation produced by it, preserves the Whole, in
 life and vigour. This is his first argument against
 the Stoics, which he illustrates by a very beautiful
 similitude, on a hint taken from Scripture:

"Nor God alone in the still calm we find,
 He mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind."

NOTES.

VER. 109. *Nor God alone in the still calm we find,*
He mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind.
 The Translator turns it thus,

"Dieu lui-même, Dieu sort de son profond repos."

And so makes an *Epicurean* God, of the Governor of
 the Universe. M. De Crousaz does not spare this ex-
 pression of *God's coming out of his profound repose*. "It
 is," says he, excessively poetical, and presents us with
 ideas which we ought not to dwell upon," etc. and
 then as usual, blames the Author for the blunder of
 his Translator. *Comm* p. 158.

VER. 109. *Nor God alone, etc*] These words are only
 a simple affirmation in the poetic dress of similitude
 to this purpose: God is not only produced by the
 subdual of the Passions, but by the turbulent exercise

Passions like elements, though born to fight,
 Yet mix'd and soften'd, in his work unite :
 These 'tis enough to temper and employ ;
 But what composes Man, can Man destroy ?
 Suffice that Reason keep to Nature's road,
 Subject, compound them, follow her and God.

115

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 112, in the MS.

The soft reward the virtuous, or invite ;
 The fierce, the vicious punish or affright.

COMMENTARY.

VER. III. *Passions, like elements, etc.*] His second argument against the Stoics (from Ver. 110 to 133.) is, that Passions go to the composition of a moral character, just as elementary particles go to the composition of an organized body : Therefore for Man to project the destruction of what composes his very Being, is the height of extravagance. 'Tis true, he tells us, that these Passions, which in their natural state, like elements, are in perpetual jar, must be tempered, softened, and united, in order to perfect the work of the great plastic Artist ; who, in this office, employs human Reason ; whose business it is to follow the road of Nature, and to observe the dictates of the Deity ; — *Follow her and God.* The use and importance of this precept is evident : For in doing the first, she will discover the absurdity of attempting to eradicate the Passions ; in doing the second, she will learn how to make them subservient to the interests of Virtue.

NOTES.

of them. A truth conveyed under the most sublime imagery that poetry could conceive or paint. For the author is here only shewing the providential issue of the Passions ; and how, by God's gracious disposition, they are turned away from their natural destructive bias, to promote the Happiness of Mankind. As to the method in which they are to be treated by Man, in whom they are found, all that he contends for, in favour of them, is only this, that they should not be quite rooted up and destroyed, as the Stoics, and their followers, in all Religions, foolishly attempted. For the rest, he constantly repeats this advice,

"The action of the stronger to suspend,
 "Reason still use, to Reason still attend."

Love, Hope, and Joy, fair pleasure's smiling train,
 Hate, Fear, and Grief, the family of pain,
 These mix'd with art, and to due bounds confin'd,
 Make and maintain the balance of the mind : 120
 The lights and shades, whose well accorded strife
 Gives all the strength and colour of our life

Pleasures are ever in our hands or eyes ;
 And when, in act, they cease, in prospect, rise :
 Present to grasp, and future still to find, 125
 The whole employ of body and of mind.
 All spread their charms, but charm not all alike ;
 On different senses different objects strike ;

COMMENTARY.

VER. 123. *Pleasures are ever in our hands or eyes ;*
 [His Third argument against the Stoics (from Ver. 122 to 127) is, that the Passions are a continual spur to the pursuit of Happiness ; which without these inciters, we should neglect ; and sink into a senseless indolence. Now Happiness is the end of our creation ; and this excitement, the means to that end ; therefore, these movers, the Passions, are the instruments of God, which he hath put into the hands of Reason to work withal.

VER. 127 *All spread their charms, etc.]* The Poet now proceeds in his subject ; and this last observation leads him naturally to the discussion of his next principle. He shews then, that though all the Passions have their turn in swaying the determinations of the mind, yet every Man hath one MASTER PASSION that at length stifles or absorbs all the rest. The fact he illustrates at large in his epistle to Lord Cobham. Here (from VER. 126 to 149.) he giveth us the CAUSE of it. Those Pleasures or Goods, which are the objects of the Passions, affect the mind by striking on the senses ; but, as through the formation of the organs of our frame, every Man hath some one sense stronger and more acute than others, the object which strikes that stronger or acuter sense, whatever it be, will be the object most desired : and consequently, the pursuit of that will be the ruling Passion : That the difference of force in this ruling Passion, shall at first, perhaps be very small or even imperceptible ; but Nature, Habit, Imagination, Wit, nay, even Reason itself shall assist

Hence diff'rent Passions more or less inflame,
 As strong or weak, the organs of the frame ; 130
 And hence one MASTER PASSION in the breast,
 Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.

As Man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,
 Receives the lurking principle of death :
 The young disease, that must subdue at length, 135
 Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his
 strength :

So, cast and mingl'd with his very frame,
 The Mind's disease, its RULING PASSION came ;
 Each vital humour which should feed the whole,
 Soon flows to this, in body and in soul : 140

Whatever warms the heart, or fills the head,
 As the mind opens, and its functions spread,
 Imagination plies her dang'rous art,
 And pours it all upon the peccant part.

Nature its mother, Habit is its nurse ; 145
 Wit, Spirit, Faculties, but make it worse ;
 Reason itself but gives it edge and pow'r ;
 As Heav'n's blest beam turns vinegar more sou'r.

COMMENTARY.

its growth, till it hath at length drawn and converted every other into itself. All which is delivered in a strain of Poetry, so wonderfully sublime, as suspends, for a while, the *ruling Passion* in every Reader, and engrosses his whole Admiration.

This naturally leads the Poet to lament the weakness and insufficiency of human Reason (from Ver. 148 to 161.) and the purpose he had in so doing, was plainly to intimate THE NECESSITY OF A MORE PERFECT DISPENSATION TO MANKIND.

NOTES.

VER. 133 *As Man, perhaps, etc.*] “Antipater Sidenius Poeta omnibus annis uno die natali tantum corripiebatur febre, et eo consumptus est satis longa senecta.” *Plin.* l. vii. *N. H.* This *Antipater* was in the times of *Crassus* ; and is celebrated for the quickness of his parts by *Cicero*.

VER. 147. *Reason itself, etc.*] The Poet, in some other of his epistles, gives examples of the doctrine and precepts here delivered. Thus, in that *Of the Use*

We, wretched subjects though to lawful sway,
 In this weak queen, some favorite still obey : 150
 Ah! if she lend not arms, as well as rules,
 What can she more than tell us we are fools?
 Teach us to mourn our Nature, not to mend,
 A sharp accuser, but a helpless friend!
 Or from a judge turn pleader, to persuade 155
 The choice we make, or justify it made;
 Proud of an easy conquest all along,
 She but removes weak Passions for the strong:
 So, when small humours gather to a gout,
 The doctor fancies he has driven them out. 160
 Yes, Nature's road must ever be preferr'd;
 Reason is here no guide, but still a guard:

COMMENTARY.

VER. 161. *Yes, Nature's road, etc*] Now as it appears from the account here given of the *ruling Passion* and its cause, (which result from the structure of the organs) that it is the road of Nature, the Poet shews (from Ver. 160 to 167) that this road is to be followed. So that the office of Reason is not to direct us what passion to exercise, but to assist us in RECTIFYING, and keeping within due bounds, that which Nature had so strongly impressed; because.

"A mightier pow'r the strong direction sends,
 "And sev'ral Men impels to sev'ral ends."

NOTES

of *Riches*, he has illustrated this truth in the character of Cotta:

"Old Cotta sham'd his fortune and his birth,
 "Yet was not Cotta void of wit or worth.
 "What though (the use of barb'rous spite forgot)
 "His kitchen vy'd in coolness with his grot?
 "If Cotta liv'd on pulle, it was no more
 "Than *hermits, saints and sages did before.*"

VER. 149. *We, wretched subjects, etc.*] St. Paul himself did not chuse to employ other arguments, when disposed to give us the highest idea of the usefulness of CHRISTIANITY (*Rom. vii*) But it may be the Poet finds a Remedy in NATURAL RELIGION. Far from it. He here leaves Reason unrelieved. What is this, but an intimation that we ought to seek for a cure in that Religion, which only dares profess to give it?

'Tis her's to rectify, not overthrow,
 And treat this passion more as friend than foe :
 A mightier Pow'r the strong direction sends, 165
 And sev'ral Men impels to sev'ral ends :
 Like varying winds, by other passions tost,
 This drives them constant to a certain coast.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 167. *Like varying winds, etc.*] The Poet having proved that the *ruling passion* (since Nature had given it us) is not to be overthrown, but *rectified*; the next inquiry will be of what *use* the ruling passion is; for an use it must have, if reason be to treat it thus mildly. This use he shews us (from Ver. 166 to 197.) is twofold, Natural and Moral

1. Its *Natural* use is to conduct Men steadily to one certain end; who would otherwise be eternally fluctuating between the equal violence of various and discordant passions, driving them up and down at random; and, by that means, to enable them to promote the good of society, by making each a contributor to the common stock:

"Let pow'r or knowledge, gold or glory, please, etc."

2. Its *Moral* use is to ingraft our ruling Virtue upon it; and by that means to enable us to promote our

NOTES.

VER. 163 *'Tis her's to rectify, etc.*] The meaning of this precept is, that as the ruling Passion is implanted by Nature, it is Reason's office to regulate, direct, and restrain, but not to overthrow it. To reform the passion of Avarice, for instance, into a parsimonious dispensation of the public revenues: to direct the passion of Love, whose object is worth and beauty,

"To the first good, first perfect, and first fair,"

the τὸ καλὸν τ' ἀγαθόν, as his master Plato advises; and to restrain Spleen to a contempt and hatred [of Vice. This is what the Poet meant: and weat every unprejudiced man could not but see he must needs mean, by RECTIFYING THE MASTER PASSION, though he had not confired us to this sense, in the reason he gives of his precept in these words;

"A mightier Pow'r the strong direction sends,

"And sev'ral Men impels to sev'ral ends."

For, What ends are they which God impels to, but the ends of Virtue?

Let pow'r or knowledge, gold or glory, please;
 Or (oft more strong than all) the love of ease;
 Through life 'tis follow'd, ev'n at life's expence;
 The merchant's toil, the sage's indolence,
 The monk's humility, the hero's pride,
 All, all alike, find reason on their side.

Th' Eternal Art educing good from ill,
 Grafts on this Passion our best principle.
 'Tis thus the Mercury of Man is fix'd,
 Strong grows the Virtue with his nature mix'd;
 The dross cements what else were too refin'd,
 And in one int'rest body acts with mind.

As fruits, ungrateful to the planter's care,
 On savage stocks inserted, learn to bear;
 The surest Virtues thus from Passions shoot,
 Wild Nature's vigour working at the root
 What crops of wit and honesty appear
 From spleen, from obstinacy, hate, or fear!
 See anger, zeal and fortitude supply;
 Ev'n av'rice, prudence; sloth, philosophy;
 Lust, through some certain strainers well refin'd,
 Is gentle love, and charms all womankind;
 Envy, to which th' ignoble mind's a slave,
 Is emulation in the learn'd or brave;
 Nor Virtue, male or female, can we name,
 But what will grow on pride, or grow on shame.

Thus Nature gives us (let it check our pride)
 The virtue nearest to our vice ally'd:

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 194, in the MS.

How oft, with Passion, Virtue points her charms!
 Then shines the Hero, then the Patriot warms.
 Peleus' great Son, or Brutus, who had known,
 Had Lucrece been a Whore, or Helen none?

COMMENTARY.

own good, by turning the exorbitancy of the ruling passion into its neighbouring Virtue;

"See anger, zeal and fortitude supply, etc."

The wisdom of the divine Artist is, as the Poet finely observes, very illustrious in this contrivance for the mind and body having now one common interest, the efforts of Virtue will have their force infinitely augmented:

"'Tis thus the Mercury, etc."

Reason the bias turns from good to ill,
 And Nero reigns a Titus, if he will.
 The fiery soul abhorr'd in Catiline,
 In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine :
 The same ambition can destroy or save,
 And makes a patriot as it makes a knave.

200

VARIATIONS.

But Virtues opposite to make agree,
 That, Reason ! is thy task ; and worthy Thee.
 Hard task, cries Bibulus, and Reason weak.
 —Make it a point, dear Marquess ! or a pique.
 Once for a whim, persuade yourself to pay
 A debt to Reason, like a debt at play.
 For right or wrong have mortals suffer'd more ?
 B—for his Prince, or ** for his Whore ?
 Whose self-denials Nature most controul ?
 He, who would save a Six-pence or his Soul ?
 Web for his health, a Chastreux for his sin,
 Contend they not which soonest shall grow thin ?
 What we resolve, we can : but here's the fault,
 We ne'er resolve to do the thing we ought.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 197. *Reason the bias, etc.*] But lest it should be objected that this account favours the doctrine of Necessity, and would insinuate that men are only acted upon, in the production of good out of evil ; the Poet teacheth (from Ver. 196 to 203.) that Man is a free agent, and hath it in his power to turn the natural passions into virtues or into vices, properly so called :

“ Reason the bias turns from good to ill,

“ And Nero reigns a Titus, if he will.”

Secondly, if it should be objected, that though he doth, indeed, tell us some actions are beneficial and some hurtful, yet he could not call those *virtuous*, nor these *vicious*, because, as he hath described things, the motive appears to be only the gratification of some passion ; give me leave to answer for him, that this would be mistaking the argument, which (to Ver. 249 of this epistle) considers the passions only with regard to *Society*, that is, with regard to their *effects* rather than their *motives* : That, however, it is his design to teach that actions are *properly virtuous and vicious* ; and though it be difficult to distinguish genuine virtue from spurious, they having both the same appearance, and both the same public effects, yet that they may be disentangled.

This light and darkness in our chaos join'd,
What shall divide? The God within the mind.

Extremes in Nature equal ends produce, 203
In Man they join to some mysterious use;
Tho' each by turns the other's bound invade,
As, in some well-wrought picture, light and shade,
And oft so mix, the difference is too nice
Twine ends the Virtue, or begins the Vice. 210

COMMENTARY.

If it be asked, by what means? He replies [from Ver. 201 to 205] by conscience; — *the God within the mind*; — and this is to the purpose; for it is a Man's own concern, and no one's else, to know whether his virtue be pure and solid; for what is it to others, whether this virtue (while, as to them, the effect of it is the same) be real or imaginary?

VER. 205. *Extremes in Nature equal ends produce, etc.*
But still it will be said, Why all this difficulty to distinguish true virtue from false? The Poet shews why (from Ver. 204 to 211.) That though indeed vice and virtue so invade each other's bounds, that sometimes we can scarce tell where one ends and the other begins, yet great purposes are served thereby, no less than the perfecting the constitution of the Whole, as lights and shades, which run into one another insensibly in a well wrought picture, make the harmony and spirit of the composition. But on this account to say there is neither vice nor virtue, the Poet shews (from Ver. 210 to 217.) would be just as wise as to say, there is neither black nor white; because the shade of that, and the light of this, often run into one another, and are mutually lost:

"Ask your own heart, and nothing is so plain;

" 'Tis to mistake them, costs the time and pain."

This is an error of *speculation*, which leads Men so foolishly to conclude that there is neither vice nor virtue.

NOTES.

VER. 204. *The God within the mind.*] A Platonic phrase for CONSCIENCE; and here employed with great judgment and propriety. For Conscience either signifies, speculatively, the judgment we pass of things upon whatever principles we chance to have; and

Fools ! who from hence into the notion fall,
That Vice or Virtue there is none at all.

If white and black blend, soften, and unite
A thousand ways, is there no black or white ?

Ask your own heart and nothing is so plain ; 215
'Tis to mistake them, costs the time and pain.

Vice is a monster of so frightful mein,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen ;

Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,

We first endure, then pity, then embrace. 220

But where the Extreme of Vice, was ne'er agreed :

Ask where's the North ? at York, 'tis on the Tweed ;

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 220. in the 1st Edition, followed these,

A Cheat ! a Whore ! who starts not at the name,
In all the Inns of Court or Drury-lane ?

COMMENTARY.

VER. 217. *Vice is a monster, etc.*] There is another Error, an error of *practice*, which hath more general and hurtful effects ; and is next considered (from Ver. 216 to 221.) It is this, that though, at the first aspect Vice be so horrible as to fright the beholder, yet, when by habit we are once grown familiar with her, we first suffer, and in time begin to lose the memory of her nature ; which necessarily implies an equal ignorance in the nature of Virtue. Hence men conclude, that there is neither one nor the other.

VER. 221. *But where th' Extreme of Vice, etc.*] But it is not only that extreme of Vice which stands next to Virtue, which betrays us into these mistakes. We are deceived too, as he shews us, (from Ver. 220 to 231.) by our observations concerning the other extreme. For from the extreme of Vice being unsettled, Men conclude that Vice itself is only nominal, at least rather comparative than real.

NOTES.

then it is only Opinion, a very unable judge and divider ; or else it signifies, practically, the application of the eternal rule of right (received by us as the law of God) to the regulation of our actions ; and then it is properly Conscience, *the God* (or the law of God) *within the mind*, of power to divide the light from the darkness in this Chaos of the passions.

In Scotland, at the Orcades; and there,
 At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where.
 No creature owns it in the first degree,
 But thinks his neighbour further gone than he;
 Ev'n those who dwell beneath its very zone,
 Or never feel the rage, or never own;
 What happier natures shrink at with affright,
 The hard inhabitant contends is right.

Virtuous and vicious ev'ry Man must be,
 Few in th' extreme, but all in the degree;
 The rogue and fool by fits is fair and wise;
 And ev'n the best, by fits, what they despise.
 'Tis but by parts we follow good or ill;
 For, Vice, or Virtue, Self directs it still;
 Each individual seeks a sev'ral goal;
 But HEAV'N's great view is One, and that the Whole.

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 226. in the MS.

The Col'nel swears the Agent is a dog,
 The Scriv'ner vows th' Attorney is a rogue.
 Against the Thief th' Attorney loud inveighs,
 For whose ten pound the County twenty pays.
 The Thief damns Judges, and the Knaves of State,
 And dying, mourns small Villains hang'd by great.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 231. *Virtuous and vicious ev'ry Man must be.*
 There is yet a third cause of this error of *no Vice, no Virtue*, composed of the other two, *i. e.* partly *speculative*, and partly *practical*. And this also the Poet considers (from Ver. 230 to 239) shewing it ariseth from the imperfection of the best characters, and the inequality of all; whence it happens that no Man is extremely virtuous or vicious; nor extremely constant in the pursuit of either. Why it so happens, the Poet informs us, who with admirable sagacity assigns the cause in this line:

"For, Vice, or Virtue, SELF directs it still."

An adherence or regard to what is, in the sense of the world, a man's own interest, making an extreme, in either, almost impossible. Its effect in keeping a good man from the extreme of Virtue, needs no explanation; and in an ill Man, Self-interest shewing him the necessity of some kind of reputation, the procuring and preserving that, will necessarily keep him from the extreme of Vice.

That counter-works each folly and caprice ;
 That disappoints th' effect of ev'ry vice ; 240
 That, happy frailties to all ranks apply'd ;
 Shame to the virgin, to the matron pride,
 Fear to the statelman, rashness to the chief,
 To kings presumption, and to crowds belief :
 That, Virtue's ends from Vanity can raise, 245
 Which seeks no int'rest, no reward but praise ;
 And build on wants, and on defects of mind,
 The joy, the peace, the glory of Mankind.
 Heav'n forming each on other to depend,
 A master, or a servant, or a friend, 250
 Bids each on other for assistance call,
 Till one Man's weakness grows the strength of all.
 Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally
 The common int'rest, or en-lear the tie.

C O M M E N T A R Y.

VER. 239. *That counter-works each folly and caprice :*]
 The mention of this principle, that *Self* directs vice
 and virtue, and its consequence, which is, that

"Each individual seeks a several goal ;
 leads the Author to observe,

"That HEAV'N's great View is One, and that the Whole."
 And this brings him naturally round again to his main
 subject, namely, *God's producing good out of ill*, which
 he prosecutes from Ver. 238 to 249.

VER. 240. *Heav'n forming each on other to depend,*]
 I. Hitherto the Poet hath been employed in discoursing
 of the use of the Passions, with regard to Society at
 large ; and in freeing his doctrine from objections :
 This is the *first* general division of the subject of this
 Epistle

II. He comes now to shew (from Ver. 248 to 261.)
 the use of these Passions, with regard to the more
 confined circle of our friends, relations, and acquaint-
 ance : and this is the *second* general division.

N O T E S.

VER. 253. *Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally
 The common int'rest, etc.]*

As these lines have been misunderstood, I shall give
 the reader their plain and obvious meaning. To these
 frailties (says he) we owe all the endearments of pri-
 vate life ; yet, when we come to that age, which ge-

To these we owe true friendship, love sincere, 255
 Each home-felt joy that life inherits here ;
 Yet from the same we learn, in its decline,
 Those joys, those loves, those int'rests to resign ;
 Taught half by Reason, half by mere decay,
 To welcome death, and calmly pass away. 260

Whate'er the Passion, knowledge, fame, or self,
 Not one will change his neighbour with himself.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 261. *Whate'er the Passion, etc.*] III. The Poet having thus shewn the use of the Passions in *Society*, and in *Domestic* life, comes, in the last place, (from Ver. 260 to the end) to shew their use to the *Individual*, even in their illusions ; the imaginary happiness they present, helping to make the real miseries of life less insupportable. And this is his *third* general division :

———"OPINION gilds with varying rays

"Those painted clouds that beautify our days," etc.

"One prospect lost, another still we gain ;

"And not a VANITY is giv'n in vain."

Which must needs vastly raise our idea of God's goodness ; who hath not only provided more than a counterbalance of *real happiness* to human miseries, but hath even, in his infinite compassion, bestowed on those who were so foolish as not to have made this provision, an *imaginary happiness* ; that they may not be quite overborne with the load of human miseries. This is the Poet's great and noble thought ; as strong and solid as it is new and ingenious : It teaches, that these illusions are the faults and follies of Men, which they wilfully fall into ; and thereby deprive them-

NOTES.

nerally disposes men to think more seriously of the true value of things, and consequently of their provision for a future state, the consideration, that the grounds of those joys, loves, and friendships, are wants, frailties, and passions, proves the best expedient to wean us from the world ; a disengagement so friendly to that provision we are now making for another state. The observation is new, and would in any place be extremely beautiful, but has here an infinite grace and propriety, as it so well confirms, by an instance of great moment, the general thesis, *That God makes Ill, at every step, productive of Good.*

The lean'd is happy nature to explore,
 The fool is happy that he knows no more ;
 The rich is happy in the plenty given, 265
 The poor contents him with the care of Heav'n.
 See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,
 The sot a hero, lunatic a king ;
 The starving chemist in his golden views
 Supremely blest, the poet in his Muse. 270

See some strange comfort ev'ry state attend,
 And pride bestow'd on ail, a common friend :
 See some fit passion ev'ry age supply,
 Hope travels through, nor quits us when we die.

Behold the child, by nature's kindly law, 275
 Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw :
 Some livelier play-thin gives his youth delight
 A little louder, but as empty quite :
 Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,
 And beads and pray'r-books are the toys of age : 280

COMMENTARY.

selves of much happiness, and expose themselves to equal misery : but that still God (according to his universal way of working) graciously turns these faults and follies so far to the advantage of his miserable creatures, as to become, for a time, the solace and support of their distresses :

“———Tho' Man's a fool, yet God is wise.”

NOTES.

VER. 270. —*the poet in his Muse.*] The Author having said, that no one would change his own profession or views for those of another, intended to carry his observations still further, and shew that men were unwilling to exchange their own acquirements even for those of the same kind, confessedly larger, and infinitely more eminent, in another.

To this end he wrote,

“What partly pleases, totally will shock :

“I question much, if Toland would be Locke.”

But wanting another proper instance of this truth, he reserved the lines above for some following edition of this Essay ; which he did not live to give.

VER. 280. *And beads and pray'r-books are the toys of age:*] A Satire on what is called, in Popery, the *Opus operatum*. As this is a description of the circle of

Pleas'd with this bauble still, as that before,
Till tir'd he sleeps, and Life's poor play is o'er.

Mean while Opinion gilds with varying rays
Those painted clouds that beautify our days;
Each want of happiness by Hope supply'd, 286
And each vacuity of sense by pride :

These build as fast as knowledge can destroy ;
In folly's cup still laughs the bubble, joy ;
One prospect lost, another still we gain ;
And not a vanity is giv'n in vain ; 290

Ev'n mean Self-love becomes by force divine,
The scale to measure others wants by thine.
See ! and confess, one comfort still must rise ;
'Tis this, Tho' Man's a fool, yet GOD IS WISE.

NOTES.

human life returning into itself by a second child-hood, the Poet has with great elegance concluded his description with the same image with which he set out—
And Life's poor play is o'er.

VER 286 *And each vacuity of sense by Pride :*] An eminent Casuist, *Father Francis Garasse* in his *Somme Theologique*, has drawn a very charitable conclusion from this principle ; which he hath well illustrated. “ *Selon la Justice*” (says this equitable Divine) “ tout travail honnête doit être recompensé de louange ou de satisfaction. Quand les bons esprits font un ouvrage excellent, ils son justement recompensez par les suffrages du Public. Quand un pauvre esprit travaille beaucoup, pour faire un mauvais ouvrage, il n'est pas juste ni raisonnable, qu'il attende des loüanges publiques ; car elles ne lui sont pas dues. Mais afin que ses travaux ne demeurent pas sans recompense, DIEU lui donne une satisfaction personnelle, que personne ne lui peut envier sans une injustice plus que barbare ; tout ainsi que Dieu, qui est juste, donne de la satisfaction aux Grenouilles de leur chant. Autrement la blâme public, joint à leur mécontentement, seroit suffisant pour les réduire au desespoir.”

 ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE III.

*Of the Nature and State of Man, with
respect to Society.*

I. **T**HE whole Universe one system of Society, Ver. 7. etc. Nothing made wholly for itself, nor yet wholly for another, Ver. 27. The happiness of Animals mutual, Ver. 49. II. Reason or Instinct operate alike to the good of each Individual, Ver. 79. Reason or Instinct operate also to Society, in all animals, Ver. 109. III. How far Society carried by Instinct, Ver. 115. How much further by Reason, Ver. 128. IV. Of that which is called the State of Nature, Ver. 144. Reason instructed by Instinct in the Invention of Arts, Ver. 166; and in the Forms of Society, Ver. 176. V. Origin of Political Societies, Ver. 196. Origin of Monarchy, Ver. 207. Patriarchal Government, Ver. 212. VI. Origin of true Religion and Government, from the same principle of Love, Ver. 231, etc. Origin of Superstition and Tyranny, from the same principle, of Fear, Ver. 237, etc. The influence of Self-love operating to the social and public Good, Ver. 266. Restoration of true Religion and Government on their first principle, Ver. 285. Mixt Government, Ver. 288. Various Forms of each, and the true end of all, Ver. 300, etc.

E P I S T L E III.

HERE then we rest: "The Universal Cause
 "Acts to one end, but acts by various laws."
 In all the madness of superfluous health,
 The trim of pride, the impudence of wealth,

VARIATIONS.

VER. I. In several Edit. in 4to.

Learn, Dulness, learn! "The Universal Cause," etc.

COMMENTARY.

We are now come to the third epistle of the Essay on Man. It having been shewn, in explaining the origin, use, and end of the Passions, in the second epistle, that man hath social as well as selfish passions, that doctrine naturally introduceth the third, which treats of man as a SOCIAL animal; and connects it with the second, which considered him as an INDIVIDUAL. And as the conclusion from the subject of the first epistle made the introduction to the second, so here again, the conclusion of the second

"(Ev'n mean Self-love becomes, by force divine,

"The scale to measure others wants by thine.)"

maketh the introduction to the third;

"Here then we rest: The Universal Cause

"Acts to one end, but acts by various laws."

The reason of *variety* in those laws, which tend to *one* and the same *end*, the good of the Whole *generally*, is, because the good of the individual is likewise to be provided for; both which together make up the good of the Whole *universally*. And this is the cause (as the Poet says elsewhere) that

"Each individual seeks a sev'ral goal."

NOTES.

VER. 3.—*superfluous health*,] Immoderate labour and immoderate study, are equally the impairers of health: They, whose station sets them above both, must needs have an abundance of it, which not being employed in the common service, but wasted in Luxury and Folly, the Poet properly calls a *superfluity*.

VER. 4. —*impudence of wealth*,] Because *wealth* pretends to be wisdom, wit, learning, honesty, and in short, all the virtues in their turns.

Let this great truth be present night and day ; 5
But most be present, if we preach or pray.

COMMENTARY.

But to prevent our resting there, God hath made each need the assistance of another ; and so

“On mutual wants built mutual happiness.”

It was necessary to explain the two first lines, the better to see the pertinency and force of what followeth (from Ver. 2 to 7.) where the Poet warns such to take notice of this truth, whose circumstances placing them in an imaginary station of Independence, and inducing a real habit of insensibility to *mutual wants* (from which wants general Happiness results) make them but too apt to overlook the true system of things viz. the men in full *health* and *opulence*. This caution was necessary with respect to society ; but still more necessary with respect to Religion: Therefore he especially recommends the memory of it as well to the Clergy as Laity, when they *preach* or *pray* ; because the preacher who doth not consider the First Cause under this view, as a Being consulting the good of the whole, must needs give a very unworthy idea of him ; and the suppliant, who prayeth as one not related to a whole, or indifferent to the happiness of it, will not only pray in vain, but offend his Maker by neglecting the interests of his dispensation.

NOTES.

VER. 3, 4, 5, 6. M. Du Resnel, not seeing into the admirable purpose of the caution, contained in these four lines, hath quite dropped the most material circumstances contained in the last of them ; and, what is worse, for the sake of a foolish antithesis, hath destroyed the whole propriety of the thought in the two first : and so between both, hath left his Author neither sense nor system.

“Dans le sein du bonheur, ou de l'adversité.”

Now of all men, those in adversity have least need of this caution, as being least apt to forget, *That God consults the good of the whole, and provides for it by means of mutual wants* ; it being seen that such who yet retain the smart of any fresh calamity, are most compassionate to others labouring under distresses, and most prompt and ready to relieve them.

Look round our World; behold the chain of Love
 Combining all below and all above.
 See plastic Nature working to this end,
 The single atoms each to other tend,
 Attract, attract'd to, the next in place
 Form'd and impell'd its neighbour to embrace,

10

COMMENTARY.

VER. 7. *Look round our World, etc.*] He now introduceth this system of human Sociability (Ver. 7, 8.) by shewing it to be the dictate of the Creator; and that Man, in this, did but follow the example of general Nature, which is united in one close system of benevolence.

VER. 9. *See plastic Nature working to this end,*] This he proveth, *first* (from Ver. 8 to 13) on the noble theory of Attraction from the œconomy of the material world; where there is a general conspiracy in all particles of Matter to work for one end; the use, beauty, and harmony of the whole mass.

NOTES.

VER. 9. *See plastic Nature, etc.*] M. Du Resnel mistook this description of the *preservation* of the material Universe, by the quality of attraction, for a description of its *creation*; and so translates it,

“*Vei du sein du Chaos eclater la lumiere,*
 “*Chaque atome ebranlé courir pour s’embrasser,*” etc.

This destroys the Poet’s fine analogical argument, by which he proves, from the circumstance of *mutual attraction* in matter, that man, while he seeks Society, and thereby promotes the good of his species, co-operates with God’s general dispensation; whereas the circumstance of a *creation* proves nothing but a *Creator*.

VER. 12. *Form’d and impell’d, etc.*] To make Matter so cohere as to fit it for the uses intended by its Creator, a proper *configuration* of its insensible parts, is as necessary as that quality so equally and universally conferred upon it, called *Attraction*. To express the first part of this thought, our Author says *form’d*, and to express the latter, *impell’d*.

See Matter next, with various life endu'd,
 Prefs to one center still, the gen'ral Good.

See dying vegetables life sustain,

15

See life dissolving vegetate again :

All forms that perish other forms supply,

(By turns we catch the vital breath, and die)

Like bubbles on the sea of Matter born,

They rise, they break, and to that sea return.

20

COMMENTARY.

VER. 13. *See Matter next, etc.*] The *second* argument (from Ver. 12 to 27.) is taken from the vegetable and animal world ; whose parts serve mutually for the production, support, and sustentation of each other.

But the observation, that God

“Connects each being, greatest with the least ;

“Made Beast in aid of Man, and Man of Beast ;

“All serv'd, all serving”.—

awaking again the pride of his impious adversaries, who cannot bear that man should be thought to be *serving* as well as *served* ; he takes this occasion again to humble them (from Ver. 26 to 49.) by the same kind of argument he had so successfully employed in the first epistle, and which the comment on that epistle hath considered at large.

NOTES.

VER. 19, 20. *Like bubbles, etc.*] M. Du Resnel translates these two lines thus,

“*Sort du néant y réentre, et reparoit au jour.*”

He is here, indeed, consistently wrong : for having (as we said) mistaken the Poet's account of the *preservation* of Matter for the *creation* of it, he commits the very same mistake with regard to the *vegetable* and *animal* systems ; and so talks now, though with the latest, of the *production of things out of nothing*. Indeed, by his speaking of their *returning into nothing*, he has subjected his Author to M. Du Croufaz's censure. “Mr. Pope descends to the most vulgar prejudices, when he tells us that *each being returns to nothing* : the Vulgar think that what disappears is annihilated,” etc. *Comm. p. 221.*

Nothing is foreign ; Parts relate to whole ;
 One all-extending, all-preserving Soul
 Connects each being, greatest with the least ;
 Made Beast in aid of Man, and Man of Beast ;
 All serv'd, all serving : nothing stands alone ;
 The chain holds on, and where it ends, unknown.

Has God, thou fool ! work'd solely for thy good,
 Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food !
 Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,
 For him as kindly spread the flow'ry lawn :
 Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings ?
 Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.
 Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat ?
 Loves of his own and raptures swell the note.
 The bounding steed you pompously bestride,
 Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride.
 Is thine alone the seed that strews the plain ?
 The birds of Heav'n shall vindicate their grain.
 Thine the full harvest of the golden year ?
 Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer :
 The hog, that plows not, nor obeys thy call,
 Lives on the labours of this Lord of all.

Know, Nature's children all divide her care ;
 The fur that warms a monarch, warm'd a bear.
 While Man exclaims, " See all things for my use !"
 " See man for mine !" replies a pamper'd goose :

NOTES.

VER. 22. *One all-extending, all-preserving Soul.*
 Which, in the language of Sir Isaac Newton, is, " Deus
 " omnipræfens est, non per virtutem solam, sed etiam
 " per substantiam : nam virtus sine substantia subsistere
 " non potest." *Newt. Princ. schol. gen. sub fin.*

VER. 23. *Greatest with the least ;*] As acting more
 strongly and immediately in beasts, whose instinct is
 plainly an external reason ; which made an old school-
 man say, with great elegance,

" Deus est anima brutorum."

" In this 'tis God directs"—

VER. 45. *See all things for my use !*] On the con-
 trary, the wise man hath said, *The Lord hath made all*
things for himself. Prov. xvi. 4.

And just as short of reason he must fall,
Who thinks all made for one, not one for all.
Grant that the pow'rful still the weak controul;
Be Man the Wit and Tyrant of the whole :

50

VARIATIONS..

After Ver. 46, in the former Editions,

What care to tend, to lodge, to cram, to treat him!
All this he knew; but not that 'twas to eat him.
As far as Goose could judge, he reason'd right;
But as to Man, mistook the matter quite.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 49. *Grant that the pow'rful still the weak controul;*] However, his adversaries, loth to give up the question, will reason upon the matter; and we are now to suppose them objecting against Providence in this manner:—"We grant, say they, that in the irrational, as in the inanimate creation, all is *serv'd*, and all is *serv'ing*: But, with regard to Man, the case is different; he standeth single: For his reason hath endowed him both with power and address, sufficient to make all things serve him; and his Self-love, of which you have so largely provided for him, will indispose him, in his turn, to serve any: Therefore your theory is imperfect."—Not so, replies the Poet, (from Ver. 48 to 79.) I grant that Man, indeed, affects to be the Wit and Tyrant of the whole, and would fain shake off

"that chain of love

"Combining all below and all above."

But Nature, even by the very gift of Reason, checks this tyrant. For Reason endowing Man with the ability of setting together the memory of the past with his conjectures about the future; and past misfortunes making him apprehensive of more to come, this disposeth him to pity and relieve others in a state of suffering.

NOTES.

VER. 50. *Be Man the Wit and Tyrant of the whole:*] Alluding to the witty system of that Philosopher, which made Animals mere Machines, insensible of pain or pleasure; and so encouraged Men in the exercise of that *Tyranny* over their fellow-creatures, consequent on such a principle.

Nature that Tyrant checks; He only knows,
 And helps, another creature's wants and woes,
 Say, will the falcon, stooping from above,
 Smit with her varying plumage, spare the dove?
 Admires the jay the insect's gilded wings?
 Or hears the hawk when Philomela sings?
 Man cares for all: to birds he gives his woods,
 To beasts his pastures, and to fish his floods;
 For some his Int'rest prompts him to provide,
 For more his Pleasure, yet for more his Pride:
 All feed on one vain Patron, and enjoy
 Th' extensive blessing of his luxury.
 That very life his learned hunger craves,
 He saves from famine, from the savage saves;
 Nay, feasts the animal he dooms his feast,
 And, till he ends the being, makes it blest;
 Which sees no more the stroke, or feels the pain,
 Than favour'd Man by touch ethereal slain.

COMMENTARY.

And the passion growing habitual, naturally extendeth its effects to all that have a sense of suffering. Now as brutes have neither Man's Reason, nor his inordinate Self-love, to draw them from the system of beneficence; so they wanted not, and therefore have not, this human sympathy of another's misery: By which passion, we see, those qualities, in Man, balance one another; and so retain him in that orderly connexion, in which Providence hath placed its whole creation. But this is not all; Man's interest and amusement, his vanity and luxury, tie him still closer to the system of beneficence, by obliging him to provide for the support of other animals; and though it be, for the most part, only to devour them with the greater gust, yet this does not abate the proper happiness of the animals so preserved, to whom Providence hath not imparted the *useless knowledge of their end*. From all which it appears, that the theory is yet uniform and perfect.

NOTES.

VER. 68. *Than favour'd Man, etc.*] Several of the ancients, and many of the Orientals since, esteemed those who were struck by lightning as sacred persons, and the particular favourites of Heaven. P.

The creature had his feast of life before ;
 Thou too must perish when thy feast is o'er ! 70
 To each unthinking being, Heav'n a friend,
 Gives not the useless knowledge of its end :
 To Man impart it, but with such a view
 As, while he dreads it, makes him hope it too :
 The hour conceal'd, and so remote the fear, 75
 Death still draws nearer, never seeming near.
 Great standing miracle ! that Heav'n assign'd
 Its only thinking thing this turn of mind.

II. Whether with Reason or with Instinct blest,
 Know, all enjoy that pow'r which suits them best ; 80

COMMENTARY.

VER. 79. *Whether with Reason, &c.*] But even to this as a caviller would still object, we must suppose he does so—"Admit (says he) that Nature hath endowed all animals, whether human or brutal, with such faculties as admirably fit them to promote the general good : yet, in its care for this, hath not Nature neglected to provide for the private good of the individual ? We have cause to think she hath ; and we suppose, it was on this exclusive consideration, that she kept back from brutes the gift of Reason (so necessary a means of private happiness) because Reason, as we find in the case of *Man*, where there is occasion for all the complicated contrivance you have described above, to make the effects of his Passions counter-work the immediate powers of his Reason, in order to keep him subservient to the general system ; Reason, we say, naturally tendeth to draw Beings into a private, independent system." This the Poet answers, by shewing (from Ver. 78 to 109.) that the happiness of animal and that of human life are widely different : The happiness of human life consisting in the improvement of the mind, can be procured by Reason only ; but the happiness of animal life consisting in the gratifications of sense, is best promoted by Instinct. And, with regard to the regular and constant operation of each ; in *that*, Instinct hath plainly the advantage ; for here God directs immediately, there only mediately through Man.

To bliss alike by that direction tend,
 And find the means proportion'd to their end.
 Say, where full Instinct is the unerring guide,
 What Pope or Council can they need beside?
 Reason, however able, cool at best,
 Cares not for service, or but serves when prest,
 Stays till we call, and then not often near;
 But honest instinct comes a volunteer,
 Sure never to o'ershoot, but just to hit;
 While still too wide or short is human Wit;
 Sure by quick Nature happiness to gain,
 Which heavier Reason labours at in vain.
 This too serves always, Reason never long;
 One must go right, the other may go wrong.
 See then the acting and comparing pow'rs
 One in their nature, which are two in ours;
 And Reason raise o'er Instinct as you can,
 In this 'tis God directs, in that 'tis Man.

Who taught the nations of the field and wood
 To shun their poison, and to chuse their food?
 Prescient, the tides or tempests to withstand,
 Build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand?
 Who made the spider parallels design,
 Sure as De-moivre, without rule or line?
 Who bid the stork, Columbus-like, explore
 Heav'ns not his own, and worlds unknown before?
 Who calls the council, states the certain day,
 Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way?

III. God, in the nature of each being, founds
 Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds:

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 84. in the MS.

While Man, with op'ning views of various ways
 Confounded, by the aid of knowledge, strays:
 Too weak to chuse, yet chusing still in haste,
 One moment gives the pleasure and distaste.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 109. *God, in the nature of each being, etc.*] The Author now cometh to the main subject of his epistle, the proof of Man's SOCIABILITY, from the two general societies composed by him; the *natural*, subject

But as he fram'd the Whole, the Whole to bless,
 On mutual Wants built mutual happiness :
 So from the first, eternal ORDER ran,
 And creature link'd to creature, man to man.
 Whate'er of life all quick'ning ether keeps, 115
 Or breathes through air, or shoots beneath the deeps,

COMMENTARY.

to *paternal* authority ; and the *civil*, subject to that of a *magistrate*. This he hath the address to introduce, from what had preceded, in so easy and natural a manner, as sheweth him to have the art of giving all the grace to the dryness and severity of Method, as well as wit to the strength and depth of Reason. The philosophic nature of his work requiring he should shew by what means those Societies were introduced, this affords him an opportunity of sliding gracefully and easily from the preliminaries into the main subject ; and so of giving his work that perfection of method, which we find only in the compositions of great writers. For having just before, though to a different purpose, described the power of bestial Instinct to attain the happiness of the *Individual*, he goeth on, in speaking of Instinct as it is serviceable both to that, and to the *Kind* (from Ver. 108 to 147.) to illustrate the original of *Society*. He sheweth, that though, as he had before observed, God had founded the proper bliss of each creature in the nature of its own existence ; yet these not being independent individuals, but parts of a Whole, God, to bless that Whole, built mutual happiness on mutual wants : Now, for the supply of mutual wants, creatures must necessarily come together ; which is the first ground of Society amongst Men. He then proceeds to that called *natural*, subject to *paternal* authority, and arising from the union of the two sexes ; describes the imperfect image of it in brutes ; then explains it at large in all its causes and effects. And lastly shews, that, as in *fact*, like mere animal Society, it is founded and preserved by mutual wants, the suppliance of which causeth mutual happiness ; so is it likewise in *right*, as a rational Society, by equity, gratitude, and the observance of the relation of things in general.

Or pours profuse on earth, one nature feeds
 The vital flame, and swells the genial seeds.
 Not man alone, but all that roam the wood,
 Or wing the sky, or roll along the flood, 120
 Each loves itself, but not itself alone,
 Each sex desires alike, till two are one.
 Nor ends the pleasure with the fierce embrace!
 They love themselves, a third time, in their race.
 Thus beast and bird their common charge attend,
 The mothers nurse it, and the fires defend; 125
 The young dismiss'd to wander earth or air,
 There stops the Instinct, and there ends the care;
 The link dissolves, each seeks a fresh embrace,
 Another love succeeds another race. 130
 A longer care Man's helpless kind demands:
 That longer care contracts more lasting bands:
 Reflection, Reason, still the ties improve,
 At once extend the int'rest and the love;
 With choice we fix, with sympathy we burn; 135
 Each Virtue in each Passion takes its turn;
 And still new needs, new helps, new habits rise,
 That graft benevolence on charities.
 Still as one brood, and as another rose,
 These nat'ral love maintain'd, habitual those: 140
 The last, scarce ripen'd into perfect Man,
 Saw helpless him from whom their life began:
 Mem'ry and forecast just returns engage,
 That pointed back to youth, this on to age;
 While pleasure, gratitude, and hope, combin'd, 145
 Still spread the int'rest, and preserv'd the kind.

IV. Nor think, in NATURE'S STATE they blindly
 trod;
 The State of Nature was the reign of God:

COMMENTARY.

VER. 147. *Nor think, in Nature's State they blindly trod;*] But the Atheist and Hobbist, against whom Mr. Pope argueth, deny the principle of *Right*, or of natural Justice, before the invention of civil compact; which, they say, gave being to it. And accordingly have had the effrontery publicly to declare, *that a state of Nature was a state of War*. This quite subverted

Self-love and Social at her birth began,
 Union the bond of all things, and of Man, 150
 Pride then was not; nor Arts, that Pride to aid;
 Man walk'd with beast, joint-tenant of the shade;
 The same his table, and the same his bed;
 No murder cloath'd him, and no murder fed.
 In the same temple, the resounding wood, 155
 All vocal beings hymn'd their equal God:

The Poet's *natural* Society: Therefore, after this account of that state, he proceedeth to support the reality of it by overthrowing the oppugnant principle of *no natural Justice*; which he doth (from Ver. 146 to 169.) by shewing, in a fine description of the state of Innocence, as represented in Scripture, that a state of Nature was so far from being without natural Justice, that it was, at first, *the reign of God*, where Right and Truth universally prevailed.

NOTES.

VER. 152. *Man walk'd with beast, joint-tenant of the shade*;] The Poet still takes his imagery from Platonic ideas, for the reason given above. Plato had said, from old tradition, that, during the Golden age, and under the reign of Saturn, the primitive language then in use was common to man and beasts. Moral Instructors took advantage of the popular sense of this tradition, to convey their precepts under those fables which give speech to the whole brute creation. The Naturalists understood the tradition in the contrary sense, to signify, that in the first ages, Men used inarticulate sounds, like beasts, to express their wants and sensations; and that it was by slow degrees they came to the use of speech. This opinion was afterwards held by Lucretius, Diodorus Sic. and Gregory of Nyss.

VER. 156. *All vocal beings, etc.*] This may be well explained by a sublime passage of the Psalmist, who calling to mind the age of Innocence, and full of the great ideas of those

“Chains of Love

“Combining all below and all above,

“Which to one point, and to one center bring

“BEAST, MAN, or ANGEL, *Servant, Lord or King*;

The shrine with gore unstain'd, with gold undrest,
 Unbrib'd, unbloody, stood the blameless priest :
 Heav'n's attribute was universal Care,
 And Man's prerogative to rule, but spare.

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breaks out into this rapturous and divine apostrophe, to call back the devious Creation to its pristine rectitude; that very state our author describes above: "Praise the Lord, all angels; praise him all ye hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded, and they were created. Praise the Lord, from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps; fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind fulfilling his word: Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars: *Beasts* and all *cattle*, creeping things and flying fowl: *Kings* of the earth, and all people; *princes* and all judges of the earth. Let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent, his glory is above the earth and heaven." *Psalms* cxlviii.

VER. 158. *Unbrib'd, unbloody, etc.*] i. e. the state described from Ver. 262 to 269, was not yet arrived.

"Then sacred seem'd th' ethereal vault no more;
 "Altars grew marble then, and reek'd with gore:
 "Then first the Flamen tasted living food;
 "Next his grim Idol smear'd with human blood;
 "With heaven's own thunders shook the world below,
 "And play'd the God an Engine on his foe."

For then, when Superstition was become so extreme as to bribe the Gods with human sacrifices; Tyranny became necessitated to woo the priest for a favourable answer.

VER. 159. *Heav'n's attribute, etc.*] The Poet supposeth the truth of the Scripture account, that Man was created Lord of this inferior world (Ep. i. Ver. 230.)

"Subjected these to those, and all to thee."

What hath misled some to imagine that our Author hath here fallen into a contradiction, was I suppose, such passages as these, *Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies*

Ah! how unlike the man of times to come!
Of half that live the butcher and the tomb;
Who, foe to Nature, hears the gen'ral groan,
Murders their species, and betrays his own.

But just disease to luxury succeeds,
And ev'ry death its own avenger breeds;
The Fury-passions from that blood began,
And turn'd on Man a fiercer savage, Man.

16;

See him from Nature rising slow to Art!
To copy Instinct then was Reason's part;

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COMMENTARY.

VER. 169. *See him from Nature rising slow to Art!*]
Strict method (in which, by this time, the reader finds

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shine, etc. And again, *Has God, thou fool! work'd solely for thy good, etc.* But, in truth, this is so far from contradicting what he had said of Man's prerogative, that it greatly confirms it, and the Scripture account concerning it. And because the licentious manner in which this subject has been treated, has made some readers jealous and mistrustful of the Author's sober meaning, I shall endeavour to explain it. Scripture says, that Man was made lord of this sublunary world: But intoxicated with Pride, the common effect of sovereignty, he erected himself, like little partial monarchs, into a tyrant. And as tyranny consists in *supposing all* made for the use of *one*; he took those freedoms with *all*, which are the consequence of such a principle. He soon began to consider the whole animal creation as his slaves rather than his subjects; as created for no use of their own, but for his use only; and therefore treated them with the utmost cruelty: And not so content, to add insult to his cruelty, he endeavoured to philosophize himself into an opinion that these animals were mere machines, insensible of pain or pleasure. Thus Man affected to be the *Wit* as well as *Tyrant* of the Whole: So that it became one who adhered to the Scripture-account of Man's dominion, to reprove this abuse of it, and to shew that

"Heav'n's attribute was Universal Care,

"And Man's prerogative to rule, but spare."

Thus then to Man the voice of Nature spake—
 “Go, from the Creatures thy instructions take :

COMMENTARY.

the Poet to be more conversant, than some were aware of) leads him next to speak of that Society, which succeeded the *Natural*, namely the *Civil*. He first explains (from Ver. 168 to 199.) the intermediate means which led Mankind from natural to civil Society. These were the invention and improvement of Arts. For while men lived in a mere state of Nature, there was no need of any other government than the Paternal; but when Arts were found out and improved, then that more perfect form, under the direction of a Magistrate, became necessary: And for these reasons; first to bring those Arts, already found, to perfection: and, secondly, to secure the product of them to their rightful proprietors. The Poet, therefore, comes now, as we say, to the invention of Arts; but being always intent on the great end for which he wrote his Essay, namely to mortify that Pride which occasions all the impious complaints against Providence; he speaks of these inventions as only lessons learnt of mere animals guided by instinct; and thus, at the same time, gives a new instance of the wonderful Providence of God, who hath continued to teach mankind in a way, not only proper to humble human pride, but to raise our idea of divine wisdom to the highest pitch. This he does in a *protopopoeia* the most sublime that ever entered into the human imagination:

Thus then to Man the voice of Nature spake:

“Go, from the Creatures thy instructions take, etc.

“And for these Arts mere Instinct could afford,

“Be crown’d as Monarchs, or as Gods ador’d.”

The delicacy of the Poet’s address in the first part of the last line, is very remarkable. In this paragraph

NOTES.

VER. 171. *Thus then to Man the voice of Nature spake—Go, etc.*] M. Du Resnel has translated the lines thus,

“La Nature indigne alors se fit entendre;

“Va, malheureux mortel, va, lui dit elle, apprendre.”

* Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield;
 * Learn from the beasts the physic of the field;

COMMENTARY.

He hath given an account of those intermediate means, which led Men from natural to civil Society, that is to say, the invention and improvement of Arts. Now here, on his conclusion of this account, and on his entry upon the description of civil Society itself, he connects the two parts the most gracefully that can be conceived, by this true historical circumstance, that it was the invention of *those Arts* which raised to the Magistracy, in this new Society formed for the perfecting of them.

NOTES.

One would wonder what should make the Translator represent Nature in such a passion with man, and calling him names, at a time when Mr. Pope supposed her in her best good humour. But what led him into this mistake, was another as gross. His Author having described the *State of Innocence* which ends at these lines,

"Heav'n's attribute was Universal Care,

"And Man's prerogative to rule, but spare"

turns from *those* times, to a view of *these latter ages*, and breaks out into this tender and humane complaint,

"Ah how unlike the *man of times to come*,

"Of half that live the Butcher and the Tomb," etc.

Unluckily, M. Du Resnel took this *man of times to come* for the corrupter of that *first age*; and so imagined the Poet had introduced NATURE only to set things right; he then supposed, of course she was to be very angry; and not finding the Author had represented her in any great Emotion, he was willing to improve upon his Original.

VER. 173. *Learn from the birds, etc.*] It is a caution commonly practised amongst Navigators, when thrown upon a desert coast, and in want of refreshment, to observe what fruits have been touched by the Birds: and to venture on these without further hesitation. P.

VER. 174. *Learn from the beasts, etc.*] See Pliny's *Nat. Hist.* l. viii. c. 27. where several instances are

- “ Thy arts of building from the Bee receive ; 175
 “ Learn of the mole to plough, the worm to weave ;
 “ Learn of the little Nautilus to sail,
 “ Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.
 “ Here too all forms of social union find,
 “ And hence let Reason, late, instruct Mankind : 180
 “ Here subterranean works and cities see ;
 “ There towns aerial on the waving tree.
 “ Learn each small people’s genius, policies,
 “ ‘The Ants’ republic, and the realm of Bees ;
 “ How those in common all their wealth bestow, 185
 “ And Anarchy without confusion know ;
 “ And these for ever, tho’ a Monarch reign,
 “ Their sep’rate cells and properties maintain.
 “ Mark what unvary’d laws preserve each state,
 “ Laws wise as Nature, and as fix’d as Fate. 190
 “ In vain thy Reason finer webs shall draw,
 “ Entangle Justice in her net of Law,
 “ And right, too rigid, harden into wrong,
 “ Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong.
 “ Yet go ! and thus o’er all the creatures sway, 195
 “ Thus let the wiser make the rest obey ;
 “ And for those Arts mere Instinct could afford,
 “ Be crown’d as Monarchs, or as Gods ador’d.”

VARIATIONS.

VER. 197. In the first Editions,

Who for those Arts they learn’d of BRUTES before,
 As Kings shall crown them, or as GODS adore.

“ Les Sauvages racontent que ce fut Michabou [
 “ DIEU des Eaux] qui apprit à leurs Ancêtres
 “ pêcher, qu’ il inventa les Rêts, et que ce fut la toile
 “ d’ARAIGNÉE, qui lui en donne l’idée.”—*Journal*
d’un Voyage dans l’Amerique Sept. par Charlevoix. Vol.
 v. p. 417. Par. 1744, 8°.

NOTES.

given of Animals discovering the medicinal efficacy
 of herbs, by their own use of them ; and pointing out
 to some operations in the art of healing, by their own
 practice.

Ver. 177. *Learn of the little Nautilus, etc.*] Oppian
 Halieut. lib. i. describes this fish in the following manner

V. Great Nature spoke ; observant Men obey'd ;
Cities were built, Societies were made ;

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COMMENTARY.

VER. 199. *Great Nature spoke ;*] After all this necessary preparation, the Poet shews (from Ver. 198 to 209.) how civil Society followed, and the advantages it produced.

NOTES.

ner : " They swim on the surface of the sea, on the
" back of their shells, which exactly resemble the hulk
" of a ship : they raise two feet like masts, and ex-
" tend a membrane between, which serves as a sail ; the
" other two feet they employ as oars at the side. They
" are usually seen in the Mediterranean." P.

VER. 199. —*observant Men obey'd ;*] The epithet is beautiful, as signifying both obedience to the Voice of Nature, and attention to the lessons of the animal creation.—But M. l'Abbe, who has a strange fatality of contradicting his original, whenever he attempts to paraphrase (as he calls it) the sense turns the lines in this manner,

" Par ces mots la nature excita l' Industrie,

" Et de l'Homme feroce en baine la furie "

Chain'd up the fury of savage Man ; and so contradicts the Author's whole system of *benevolence* : and goes over to the Atheist's ; who supposes *the state of nature to be a state of war*. What seems to have misled him was these lines,

" What war could ravish, Commerce could bestow,

" And he return'd a friend who came a foe."

But M. Du Resnel should have considered, that though the Author holds, *a state of nature to be a state of peace*, yet he never imagined it impossible that there should be quarrels in it. He had said,

" So drives self-love through just and through unjust."

He pushes no system to an extravagance, but *steers* (as he says in his preface) *through doctrines seemingly opposite*, or, in other words, follows truth uniformly throughout.

Here rose one little state; another near
 Grew by like means, and join'd, through love or fear.
 Did here the trees with ruddier burthens bend,
 And there the streams in purer rills descend?
 What War could ravish, Commerce could bestow,
 And he return'd a friend, who came a foe. 206
 Converse and Love mankind might strongly draw,
 When Love was Liberty, and Nature Law.
 Thus States were form'd; the name of King unknown,
 Till common int'rest plac'd the sway in one. 210

VARIATIONS.

VER. 201. *Here rose one little state, etc.*] In the MS. thus,

The Neighbours leagu'd to guard their common spot;
 And Love was Nature's dictate, Murder, not.
 For want alone each animal contends;
 Tigers with Tigers, that remov'd, are friends.
 Plain Nature's wants the common mother crown'd,
 She pour'd her acorns, herbs, and streams around.
 No Treasure then for rapine to invade;
 What need to fight for sunshine, or for shade?
 And half the cause of contest was remov'd,
 When beauty could be kind to all who lov'd.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 209. *Thus States were form'd;*] Having thus explained the original of Civil Society, he shews us next (from Ver. 208 to 215.) that to this Society a *civil magistrate* properly so called, did belong: And this in confutation of that idle hypothesis, which pretends that God conferred the regal title on the Fathers of Families; from whence men, when they had instituted Society, were to fetch their Governors. On the contrary, our Author shews, that a King was unknown, till common interest, which led men to institute civil government, led them at the same time to institute a Governor. However, that it is true that the same wis-

NOTES.

VER. 208. *When Love was Liberty,*] i. e. When men had no need to guard their native Liberty from their governors by civil pactions; the love which each master of a family had for those under his care being their best security.

'Twas VIRTUE ONLY (or in arts or arms,
Diffusing blessings, or averting harms)
The same which in a Sire the Sons obey'd,
A Prince the Father of a People made.

VI. Till then, by Nature crown'd, each Patriarch
late;
King, priest, and parent of his growing state;

COMMENTARY.

dem or valour, which gained regal obedience from sons to the fire, procured kings a paternal authority, and made them considered as fathers of their people. Which probably was the original (and while mistaken, continues to be the chief support) of that slavish error: Antiquity representing its earliest monarchs under the idea of a common father, *πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν*. Afterwards, indeed, they became a kind of foster-fathers, *ποσειδάων*, as Homer calls one of them: Till at length they began to devour that flock they had been so long accustomed to shear; and, as Plutarch says of Cecrops, *ἐκ χειρὸς βασιλεως ἀρχεν καὶ δεκανοτόδεσιν γεγόμενον ΤΥΡΑΝΝΟΝ*.

VER. 215. *Till then, by Nature crown'd, etc.*] The Poet now returns (at Ver. 215 to 241.) to what he had left unfinished in his description of natural Society. This, which appears irregular, is, indeed, a fine instance of his thorough knowledge of method. I will explain it:

This third epistle, we see, considers Man with respect to SOCIETY; the second, with respect to HIMSELF; and the fourth, with respect to HAPPINESS. But in none of these relations does the Poet ever lose sight of him under that in which he stands to GOD: It will follow, therefore, that speaking of him with respect to Society, the account would be most imperfect,

NOTES.

VER. 211. *'Twas Virtue only, etc.*] Our Author hath good authority for this account of the origin of kingship. Aristotle assures us, that it was Virtue only, or in arts or arms: *Καθίσταται Βασιλεὺς ἐκ τῶν ἐπιεικῶν καὶ ἐπιερχομένην ἀρετῆς, ἢ πραξέων τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρετῆς, ἢ καὶ ἐπιερχομένην τοῖσιν γένεσι.*

On him, their second Providence, they hung,
Their law his eye, their oracle his tongue.

COMMENTARY.

were he not at the same time considered with respect to his *Religion*; for between these two, there is a close, and, while things continue in order, a most interesting connection:

“ True FAITH, true POLICY united ran;
“ That was but love of God, and this of Man.”

Now Religion suffering no change or depravation when Man first entered into civil Society, but continuing the same as in the state of Nature; the Author, to avoid repetition, and to bring the account of *true* and *false* Religion nearer to one another, in order to contrast them by the advantage of that situation, deferred giving account of his *Religion* till he had spoken of the origin of civil Society. Thence it is, that he here resumes the account of the state of Nature, that is, so much of it as he had left untouched, which was only the *Religion* of it. This consisting in the knowledge of the one God, the Creator of all things, he shews how Men came by that knowledge; That it was either found out by REASON, which giving to every effect a cause, instructed them to go from cause to cause, till they came to the first, who, being causeless, would necessarily be judged self-existent: or else that it was taught by TRADITION, which preserved the memory of the Creation. He then tells us *what* these men, undebauched by false science, understood by God's nature and attributes: First, of God's *Nature*, that they easily distinguished between the Worker and the Work; saw the substance of the Creator to be distinct and different from that of the Creature, and so were in no danger of falling into the horrid opinion of the Greek philosophers, and their follower, Spinoza. And simple Reason teaching them that the Creator was but One, they easily saw that ALL WAS RIGHT, and so were in as little danger of falling into the Manichean error; which, when *oblique Wit* had broken the *steady light of Reason*, imagined all was not right having before imagined that all was

He from the wond'ring furrow call'd the food,
 Taught to command the fire, controul the flood, 220
 Draw forth the monsters of th' abyfis profound,
 Or fetch th' aerial eagle to the ground.
 Till drooping, sick'ning, dying, they began
 Whom they rever'd as God to mourn as Man :
 Then, looking up from fire to fire, explor'd 225
 One great first Father, and that first ador'd.

COMMENTARY.

not the work of One. Secondly, he shews, what they understood of God's *Attributes*; that they easily acknowledged a Father where they found a Deity; and could not conceive a sovereign Being to be any other than a sovereign Good.

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VER. 219. *He from the wond'ring furrow, etc.] i. e.* He subdued the intractability of all the *four elements*, and made them subservient to the use of Man.

VER. 225. *Then looking up, etc.]* The Poet here maketh their more serious attention to Religion to have arisen, not from their gratitude amidst abundance, but from their inability in distress; by shewing, that in prosperity, they rested in *second causes*, the immediate authors of their blessings, *whom they revered as God*; but that, in adversity, they reasoned up to the *First*:

“Then, looking up from fire to fire,” etc.

This, I am afraid, is but too true a representation of humanity.

VER. 225 to Ver. 240.] M. Du Resnel, not apprehending that the Poet was here returned to finish his description of the State of Nature, has fallen into one of the grossest errors that ever was committed. He has mistaken this account of *true Religion* for an account of the *origin of Idolatry*; and thus he fatally embellishes his own blunder.

“Jaloux d'en conserver les traits et la figure,

“Leur zèle industrieux inventa la peinture.

“Leurs neveux, attentifs à ces hommes fameux,

“Qui par le droit du sang avoient régné sur eux,

“Trouvent-ils dans leur suite un grand, un premier pere,

“Leur aveugle respect l'adore et le révere.”

Here you have one of the finest pieces of reasoning turned at once into a heap of nonsense. The unlucky

Or plain tradition that this All begun,
 Convey'd unbroken faith from fire to son;
 The worker from the work distinct was known,
 And simple reason never sought but one: 230
 Ere Wit oblique had broke that steady light,
 Man, like his Maker, saw that all was right;
 To Virtue, in the paths of pleasure trod,
 And own'd a Father when he own'd a God.
 Love all the faith, and all th' allegiance then; 235
 For Nature knew no right divine in Men,
 No ill could fear in God, and understood
 A sov'reign being but a sov'reign good.
 True faith, true policy, united ran,
 That was but love of God, and this of Man. 240
 Who first taught souls enslav'd, and realms undone,
 Th' enormous faith of many made for one;

COMMENTARY.

VER. 241. *Who first taught souls enslav'd, etc.*] Order leadeth the Poet to speak (from Ver. 240 to 245.) of the corruption of civil Society into Tyranny, and its causes; and here, with all the dexterity of address, as

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term of *Great first Father*, was mistaken by our Translator to signify a *Great Grand Father*. But he should have considered, that Mr. Pope always represents God under the idea of a FATHER: He should have observed, that the Poet is here describing those men who

“To *Virtue* in the paths of pleasure trod,

“And own'd a *Father*, where they own'd a *God*.”

VER. 231. *Ere Wit oblique, etc.*] A beautiful allusion to the effects of the prismatic glass on the rays of light.

VER. 242. *Th' enormous faith, etc.*] In this Aristotle placeth the difference between a King and a Tyrant: that the first supposeth himself made for the People: the other, that the People are made for him: Βασιλεὺς ὁ βασιλεύς εἶναι φύλαξ. ὅπως οἱ μὲν κεκλιμένοι τὰς πόλεις μὴδὲν ἄδικον πάσχωσιν. ὁ δὲ δῆμος μὴ ἰβρίσθαι μὴδὲν ἰβρίσθαι ΤΥΡΑΝΝΙΣ πρὸς ὅδον ἀπεβλέπει κοινόν, εἰ μὴ τῆς ἰδίας ἀφ' αἰτίας χάριν. Pol. lib. v. cap. 10.

That proud exception to all Nature's laws,
 'T' invert the world, and counter-work its Cause?
 Force first made Conquest, and that conquest, law;
 Till Superstition taught the Tyrant awe, 246

COMMENTARY.

well as force of truth, he observes it arose from the violation of that great Principle, which he so much insists upon throughout his Essay, *that each was made for the use of all*. We may be sure, that in this corruption, where right or natural justice was cast aside, and violence, the Atheist's Justice, presided in its stead, Religion would follow the fate of civil Society: We know, from ancient history, it did so. Accordingly Mr. Pope, (from Ver. 244 to 269.) together with corrupt Politics, describes corrupt Religion and its Causes: he first informs us, agreeable to his exact knowledge of Antiquity, that it was the Politician, and not the Priest (as the illiterate tribe of Freethinkers would make us believe) who first corrupted Religion. Secondly, That the Superstition he brought in was not invented by him, as an engine to play upon others (as the dreaming Atheist feigns, who would thus account for the origin of Religion) but was a trap he first fell into himself.

"Superstition taught the tyrant awe."

NOTES.

VER. 245. *Force first made Conquest, etc.*] All this is agreeable to fact, and shews our Author's knowledge of human nature. For that *Impotency* of mind (as the Latin Writers call it) which gives birth to the enormous crimes necessary to support a Tyranny, naturally subjects its owner to all the vain, as well as real, errors of Conscience: Hence the whole machinery of
 SUPERSTITION.

It is true, the Poet observes, that afterwards, when the Tyrant's fright was over, he had cunning enough, from the experience of the effect of Superstition upon himself, to turn it, by the assistance of the Priest (who for his reward went shares with him in the Tyranny) against the justly dreaded resentment of his subjects.

'Then shar'd the Tyranny, then lent it aid,
And Gods of Conqu'rors, Slaves of Subjects made:
She 'midst the light'ning's blaze, and thunder's sound,
When rock'd the mountains, and when groan'd the
ground,

She taught the weak to bend, the proud to pray,
To pow'r unseen, and mightier far than they:
She, 'from the rending earth and bursting skies,
Saw Gods descend, and fiends infernal rise:
Here fix'd the dreadful, there the blest abodes;
Fear made her Devils, and weak Hope her Gods;
Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
Whose attributes were Rage, Revenge, or Lust;
Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,
And form'd like tyrants, tyrants would believe.
Zeal then, not charity, became the guide;
And hell was built on spite, and heav'n on pride.

NOTES.

For a Tyrant naturally and reasonably supposeth all his Slaves to be his Enemies.

Having given the Causes of Superstition, he next describeth its objects:

"Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust," etc.

The ancient Pagan Gods are here very exactly described. This fact evinces the truth of that original, which the Poet gives to Superstition; for if these phantasms were first raised in the imagination of Tyrants, they must needs have the qualities here assigned to them. Force being the Tyrant's Virtue, and Luxury his happiness, the attributes of his God would of course be *Revenge* and *Lust*; in a word, the antitype of himself. But there was another, and more substantial cause, of the Resemblance between a Tyrant and a Pagan God, and that was the making *Gods of Conquerors*, as the Poet says; and so canonizing a tyrant's vices into his person.

VER. 262. —and heav'n on pride.] This might be very well said of those times, when no one was content to go to Heaven without being received there on the footing of a God, with the ceremony of *Antithesis*.

Then sacred seem'd th' ethereal vault no more ;
 Altars grew marble then, and reek'd with gore :
 Then first the Flamen tasted living food ; 265
 Next his grim idol smear'd with human blood ;
 With heav'n's own thunders shook the world below,
 And play'd the God an engine on his foe.
 So drives Self-love, through just and through unjust,
 To one Man's pow'r, ambition, lucre, lust : 270
 The same Self-love, in all, becomes the cause
 Of what restrains him, Government and Laws.
 For, what one likes if others like as well,
 What serves one will, when many wills rebel ?
 How shall he keep, what, sleeping or awake, 275
 A weaker may surprize, a stronger take ?
 His safety must his liberty restrain :
 All join to guard what each desires to gain.
 Forc'd into virtue thus by Self-defence,
 Ev'n Kings learn'd justice and benevolence : 280

COMMENTARY.

VER. 269. *So drives self-love, etc.*] The Inference
 our Author draws from all this (from Ver. 268 to 283.)
 is, that SELF-LOVE driveth through right and wrong ;
 it causeth the Tyrant to violate the rights of mankind ;
 and it causeth the People to vindicate that violation.
 For Self-love being common to the whole species, and
 setting each individual in pursuit of the same objects,
 it became necessary for each, if he would secure his
 own, to provide for the safety of another's. And thus
 Equity and Benevolence arose from that same Self-love
 which had given birth to Avarice and Injustice :

“ His Safety must his Liberty restrain ;

“ All join to guard what each desires to gain.”

The Poet hath not any where shewn greater address,
 in the disposition of this work, than with regard to the
 inference before us ; which not only giveth a proper
 and timely support to what had been advanced in the
 second epistle concerning the nature and effects of Self-
 love, but is a necessary introduction to what follows,
 concerning the Reformation of Religion and Society ;
 as we shall see presently.

Self-love forsook the path it first pursu'd,
And found the private in the publick good.

'Twas then, the studious head, or gen'rous mind,
Follow'r of God, or friend of human-kind,

POET or PATRIOT, rose but to restore

28;

The Faith and Moral, Nature gave before ;

COMMENTARY.

VER. 283. *'Twas then, the studious head, etc.*] The Poet hath now described the rise, perfection, and decay of civil Policy and Religion in the more early times. But the design had been imperfect, had he dropt his discourse here: There was, in after ages, a recovery of these from their several corruptions. Accordingly, he hath chosen that happy æra for the conclusion of his Song. But as good and ill Governments and Religions succeed one another without ceasing, he now leaveth facts, and turneth his discourse (from Ver. 282 to 295.) to speak of a more lasting reform of mankind, in the Invention of those philosophic Principles, by whose observance, a Policy and a Religion may be for ever kept from sinking into Tyranny and Superstition:

“ 'Twas then, the studious head or gen'rous mind,

“ Follower of God, or friend of human-kind,

“ Poet or Patriot, rose but to restore

“ The Faith and Moral, Nature gave before ;” etc.

The easy and just transition into this subject from the foregoing is admirable. In the foregoing he had described the effects of Self-love ; and now, with great art, and high probability, he maketh Men's *observations* on these effects the occasion of those discoveries which they have made of the true principles of Policy and Religion, described in the present paragraph ; and thus he evidently hinteth at in that fine transition,

“ 'Twas THEN, the studious head,” etc.

NOTES.

VER. 283. *'Twas then, etc.*] The Poet seemeth here to mean the polite and flourishing age of Greece ;—and those benefactors to Mankind, which he had principally in view, were SOCRATES and ARISTOTLE ; who, of all the pagan world, spoke best of God, and wrote best of Government.

Re-lum'd her ancient light, not kindled new ;
 If not God's image, yet his shadow drew :
 Taught Pow'r's due use to People and to Kings,
 Taught nor to slack, nor strain its tender strings, 290
 The less, or greater, set so justly true,
 That touching one must strike the other too ;
 Till jarring int'rests of themselves create
 Th' according music of a well-mix'd State.
 Such is the World's great Harmony, that springs 295
 From Order, Union, full Consent of things:

COMMENTARY.

VER. 295. *Such is the World's great Harmony, etc.*] Having thus described the true principles of civil and ecclesiastical Policy, he proceedeth (from Ver. 294 to 303.) to illustrate the harmony between the two Policies, by the universal harmony of Nature.

"Such is the World's great Harmony, that springs

"From Order, Union, full Content of things :"

Thus, as in the beginning of this epistle he supported the *general* principle of mutual Love or Association, by considerations drawn from the particular properties of Matter, and the mutual dependance between vegetable and animal life ; so, in the conclusion, he hath enforced the *particular* principle of Civil and Religious Society, from that *general* Harmony, which springs, in part, from those properties and dependencies.

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VER. 295. *Such is the World's great Harmony, etc.*] An harmony very different from the PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY of the celebrated Leibnitz, which introduceth a Fatality destructive of all Religion and Morality. Yet hath the learned M. de Crousaz ventured to accuse our Poet of espousing that dangerous whimsy. The *pre-established harmony* was built upon, and is an outrageous extension of a conception of Plato ; who, combating the atheistical objections about the *origin of Evil*, employs this argument in defence of Providence ; "That amongst an infinite number of possible worlds in God's idea, this, which

Where small and great, where weak and mighty made
To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade;

NOTES.

“ he hath created and brought into being, and which
“ admits of a mixture of Evil, is the best. But if the
“ best, then evil consequently is partial, comparatively
“ small, and tendeth to the greater perfection of the
“ whole.” This Principle is espoused and supported
by Mr. Pope with all the power of reason and poetry.
But neither was Plato a Fatalist, nor is there any
fatalism in the argument. As to the truth of the
notion, that is another question; and how far it clear-
eth up the very difficult controversy about the origin
of Evil, is still another. That it is a full solution of
the difficulty, I cannot think, for reasons too long to
be given in this place. Perhaps we shall never have a
full solution here: and it may be no great matter
though we have not, as we are demonstrably certain of
the moral attributes of the Deity. Yet this will never
hinder Writers from exposing themselves on this subject.
A late Author thinks he can account for the *Origin of*
Evil, and therefore he will write: he thinks too, that
the clearing up this difficulty is necessary to secure the
foundations of Religion, and therefore he will print.
But he is doubly mistaken: he must know little of
Philosophy to fancy that he has found the solution; and
still less of Religion to imagine that the want of his solu-
tion can affect our belief in God. Such Writers

Amuse th' unlearn'd, and make the learned smile.

However, Mr. Pope may be justified in receiving and
imposing this Platonic notion, as it hath been adopted
by the most celebrated and orthodox divines both of
the ancient and modern church.

This doctrine, we own then, was taken up by Leib-
nitz; but it was to ingraft upon it a most pernicious
fatalism. Plato said, God *chose* the best: Leibnitz said,
he *could not but* chuse the best, as he could not act
without, what this philosopher called, a *sufficient reason*.
Plato supposed freedom in God to chuse one of two
things equally good: Leibnitz held the supposition to

More pow'rful each as needful to the rest,
And, in proportion as it blesses, blest;

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be absurd: however, admitting the case, he still held that God could *not* chuse one of two things equally good. Thus it appears, the first went on the system of Freedom; and that the latter, notwithstanding the most artful disguises of his principles, in his *Theodicée*, was a thorough Fatalist: For we cannot well suppose he would give that freedom to Man which he had taken away from God. The truth of the matter seems to be this: he saw, on the one hand, the monstrous absurdity of supposing, with Spinoza, that blind Fate was the author of a coherent Universe; but yet, on the other, he could not conceive with Plato, how God could foresee and conduct, according to an archetypal idea, a World, of all possible Worlds the best, inhabited by *free Agents*. This difficulty, therefore, which made the Socinians take Prescience from God, disposed Leibnitz to take Free-will from Man: And thus he fashioned his fantastical hypothesis; he supposed that when God made the body, he impressed on his new created Machine a certain series or suite of *motions*; and that when he made the fellow soul, he impressed a correspondent series of *ideas*; whose operations, throughout the whole duration of the union, were so exactly timed, that whenever an *idea* was excited, a correspondent *motion* was ever ready to satisfy the volition. Thus, for instance, when the mind had the *will* to raise the arm to the head, the body was so pre-contrived, as to raise, at that very moment, the part required. This he called the PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY; and with this he promised to do wonders. "Yet after all," (says an excellent philosopher and best interpreter of Newton) "he owned to his friends, that this extraordinary notion was only a *lufus ingenii* (un jeu d'esprit) to try his parts, and laugh at the credulity of Philosophers, who are as fond of a new paradox, as Enthusiasts of a new light. If at other times he was so pleased with his own notions in the *Theodicée*, as

Draw to one point, and to one centre bring
Beast, Man, or Angel, Servant, Lord, or King.

For Forms of Government let fools contest;
Whate'er is best administer'd is best:

COMMENTARY.

VER. 303. *For Forms of Government let fools contest, etc.*] But now the Poet, having so much commended the invention and inventors of the philosophic principles of Religion and Government, lest an evil use should be made of this, by Men's resting in theory and speculation, as they have been always too apt to do in matters where *practice* makes their happiness, he cautions his reader (from Ver. 302 to 311.) against this error. The seasonableness of this reproof will appear evident enough to those who know, that mad disputes about Liberty and Prerogative had once well nigh overturned our Constitution; while others about Mystery and Church Authority had almost destroyed the very spirit of our Religion.

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"to defend them seriously against the learned Dr. Clarke; that shews only that he angled for two different sorts of reputation, from the same performance; and unluckily he lost both. The subject was too serious to pass for a romance; and the principles too absurd to be admitted for truth." *Mr. Baxter's Appendix to the Inquiry into the nature of the human soul*, p. 162. As this was the case, none would have thought it amiss, in M. Voltaire, to oppose one Romance to another, had he rested there. But his Tale of *Candide*, which professes to ridicule the *Optimisme* of Leibnitz, was apparently composed in favour of an irreligious *Naturalism*, which he makes the solution of all the difficulties in the story.

VER. 303. *For Forms of Government, etc.*] These fine lines have been strangely misunderstood; the author, against his own express words, against the plain sense of his system, hath been conceived to mean, That all Governments and all Religions were, as to their forms and objects, indifferent. But as this wrong

For Modes of Faith let graceless zealots fight ; 305
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right :

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judgment proceeded from ignorance of the reason of the reproof, as explained above, that explanation is alone sufficient to rectify the mistake.

However, not to leave him under the least suspicion in a matter of so much importance, I shall justify the sense here given to this passage, more at large :

I. And first as to Society : Let us consider the words themselves : and then compare this mistaken sense with the context.

The Poet, we may observe, is here speaking, not of civil Society at large, but of a *just* legitimate Policy :

“Th’ according music of a *well-mix’d* State.”

Now mix’d States are of various kinds ; in some of which the Democratic, in others the Aristocratic, and in others, the Monarchic form prevails. Now, as each of these mixed Forms is equally legitimate, as being founded on the principles of natural liberty, that man is guilty of the highest folly, who chuseth rather to employ himself in a speculative contest for the superior excellence of one of these *Forms* to the rest, than in promoting the good administration of that settled *Form* to which he is subject. And yet most of our warm disputes about Government, have been of this kind. Again, if by *Forms of Government*, must needs be meant legitimate Government, because that is the subject under debate ; then by *Modes of Faith*, which is the correspondent idea, must needs be meant the modes or explanations of the True Faith, because the Author is here too on the subject of true Religion :

“Relum’d her ancient light, not kindled new.”

Besides, the very expression (than which nothing can be more precise) confineth us to understand by *Modes of Faith*, those human explanations of Christian Mysteries, in contending about which, zeal and ignorance have so perpetually violated Charity.

In Faith and Hope the world will disagree,
But all Mankind's concern is Charity :

NOTES.

Secondly, If we consider the *context* ; to suppose him to mean, that *all Forms of Government* are indifferent, is making him directly contradict the preceding paragraph ; where he extols the Patriot for discriminating the *true* from the *false* modes of Government. He, says the Poet,

“ Taught Pow'r's *due* use to People and to Kings,
“ Taught not to *slack*, nor *strain* its tender strings ;
“ The less or greater set so justly *true*,
“ That touching one, must strike the other too ;
“ Till jarring int'rests of themselves create
“ Th' *according* music of a *well-mix'd* State.”

Here he recommended the true Form of Government, which is the *mixed*. In another Place he as strongly condemneth the false, or the absolute *jure divino* Form :

“ For Nature knew no *right divine* in Men.”

But the Reader will not be displeased to see the Poet's own apology, as I find it written in the Year 1740, in his own hand, in the margin of a pamphlet, where he found these two celebrated lines very much misapplied

“ The Author of these lines was far from meaning that
“ no one form of Government is, in itself, better than
“ another, (as, that mixed or limited Monarchy, for
“ example, is not preferable to absolute) but that no
“ form of Government, however excellent or preferable,
“ able, in itself, can be sufficient to make a people
“ happy, unless it be administered with integrity. On
“ the contrary, the best sort of Government, when the
“ *form* of it is preserved, and the *administration* corrupted,
“ is most dangerous.”

II. Again, to suppose the Poet to mean, that *all Religions* are indifferent, is an equally wrong, as well as uncharitable suspicion. Mr. Pope, though his subject, in this *Essay on Man*, confineth him to Natural Religion ; yet he giveth frequent intimations of a more sublime Dispensation, and even of the necessity of it, particularly in his second epistle (Ver. 149, etc.) where

All must be false that thwart this One great End;
And all of God, that bless Mankind or mend.

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he confesseth the weakness and insufficiency of human Reason.

And likewise in his fourth Epistle, where, speaking of the good Man, the favourite of Heaven, he sayeth,

"For him alone, *Hope* leads from goal to goal,

"And opens still, and opens on his soul;

"Till, lengthen'd on to *Faith*, and unconfin'd,

"It pours the bliss that fills up all the mind."

But Natural Religion never lengthened Hope on to Faith; nor did any Religion, but the Christian, ever conceive that Faith could fill the mind with happiness.

Lastly, in this very epistle, and in this very place, speaking of the great Restorers of the *Religion of Nature*, he intimates that they could only draw God's shadow, not his image:

"Relum'd her ancient light, not kindled new,

"If not God's image, yet his shadow drew:"

as reverencing that truth, which telleth us, this discovery was reserved for the *glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God.* 2 Cor. iv. 4.

VER. 305. For *Modes of Faith* let graceless zealots fight;] These latter ages have seen so many scandalous contentions for *modes of faith*, to the violation of Christian Charity, and dishonour of sacred Scripture, that it is not at all strange they should become the object of so benevolent and wise an Author's resentment.

But that which he here seemed to have more particularly in his eye, was the long and mischievous squabble between W——D and JACKSON, on a point confessedly above Reason, and amongst those adorable mysteries which it is the honour of our Religion to find unfathomable. In this, by the weight of answers and replies, redoubled upon one another without mercy, they made so profound a progress, that the *One* proved, nothing hindered in Nature, but that *the Son might have been the Father*; and the *Other*, that nothing hindered in Grace but that *the Son may be a mere Crea-*

Man, like the gen'rous vine, supported lives;
The strength he gains is from th' embrace he gives.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 311. *Man, like the gen'rous vine, etc.*] Having thus largely considered Man in his social capacity, the Poet, in order to fix a momentous truth in the mind of his reader, concludes the epistle in recapitulating the *two Principles* which concur to the support of this part of his character, namely, SELF-LOVE and SOCIAL; and in shewing that they are only two different motions of the appetite to Good, by which the Author of Nature hath enabled Man to find his own happiness in the happiness of the Whole. This he illustrates with a thought as sublime as that general harmony which he describes:

“ On their own Axis as the Planets run,
“ Yet make at once their circle round the Sun;
“ So two consistent motions act the Soul;
“ And one regards Itself, and one the Whole.
“ Thus God and Nature link'd the gen'ral frame,
“ And bade Self-love and Social be the same.”

For he hath the art of converting poetical ornaments into philosophic reasoning; and of improving a simile into an analogical argument; of which, more in our next.

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ture. But if, instead of throwing so many Greek Fathers at one another's heads, they had but chanced to reflect on the sense of one Greek word, ΑΙΕΙΠΙΑ, that signifies both INFINITY and IGNORANCE, this single *equivocation* might have saved them ten thousand which they expended in carrying on the controversy. However, those *Mists that magnified the scene*, enlarged the Character of the Combatants: and no body expecting *common sense* on a subject where we have no ideas, the defects of dullness disappeared, and its advantages (for, advantages it has) were all provided for.

The worst is, such kind of Writers seldom know when to have done. For writing themselves up into the same delusion with their Readers, they are apt to venture out into the more open paths of Literature, where their re-

On their own Axis as the Planets run,
 Yet make at once their circle round the Sun ;
 So two consistent motions act the Soul ;
 And one regards Itself, and one the Whole.

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putation, made out of that stuff which Lucian calls, *ἑνὸς ὁλόχεος*, presently falls from them, and their nakedness appears. And thus it fared with our two worthies. The World, which must always have something to amuse it, was now, and it was time, grown weary of its play-things; and caught at a new object that promised them more agreeable entertainment. Tindal, a kind of Bastard-Socrates, had brought our speculations from *Heaven to Earth*: and, under the pretence of advancing the Antiquity of Christianity, laboured to undermine its Original. This was a controversy that required another management. Clear sense, severe reasoning, a thorough knowledge of profane and sacred Antiquity, and an intimate acquaintance with Human Nature, were the qualities proper for such as engaged in this subject. A very unpromising adventure for these metaphysical nurslings, bred up in the gloomy regions of chimeras. Yet they would needs venture out. What they got by it was only to be once well laughed at, and then forgotten. But one odd circumstance deserves to be remembered; though they wrote not, we may be sure, in concert, yet each attacked this formidable adversary at the same time; fastened upon him in the same place; and mumbled him with just the same toothless rage. But the ill success of this escape soon brought them to themselves. The One made a fruitless effort to revive the old game, in a discourse on *The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*; and the Other has been ever since rambling in *SPACE and TIME*.

This short history, as insignificant as the subjects of it are, may not be altogether useless to posterity. Divines may learn by these examples to avoid the mischiefs done to Religion and Literature, though the affectation of being *wise* above what is written, and *knowing* beyond what can be understood.

Thus God and Nature link'd the gen'ral frame,
And bade Self-love and Social be the same.

NOTES.

VER. 318. *And bade Self-love and Social be the same.*
True *Self-love* is an appetite for that *proper* good, for
the enjoyment of which, we were made as we are.
Now that good is commensurate with all other good,
and a part and portion of Universal Good: it is
therefore the *same with Social*, which hath these prop-
erties.

 ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE IV.

Of the Nature and State of Man, with respect to Happiness.

I. FALSE *Notions of Happiness, Philosophical and Popular, answered from Ver. 19 to 27.* II. *It is the End of all Men, and attainable by all, Ver. 30. God intends Happiness to be equal; and to be so, it must be social, since all particular Happiness depends on general, and since he governs by general, not particular Laws, Ver. 37. As it is necessary for Order, and the peace and welfare of Society, that external goods should be unequal, Happiness is not made to consist in these, Ver. 51. But, notwithstanding that inequality, the balance of Happiness among Mankind is kept even by Providence, by the two Passions of Hope and Fear, Ver. 70.* III. *What the Happiness of Individuals is, as far as is consistent with the constitution of this world; and that the good Man has here the advantage, Ver. 77. The error of imputing to Virtue what are only the calamities of Nature, or of Fortune, Ver. 94.* IV. *The folly of expecting that God should alter his general Laws in favour of particulars, Ver. 121.* V. *That we are not judges who are good: but that whoever they are, they must be happiest, Ver. 133, etc.* VI. *That external goods are not the proper rewards, but often inconsistent with, or destructive of, Virtue, Ver. 165. That even these can make no Man happy without Virtue: Instanced in Riches, Ver. 183. Honours, Ver. 191. Nobility, Ver. 203. Greatness, Ver. 215. Fame, Ver. 235. Superior Ta-*

lents, Ver. 257, etc. *With pictures of human Infelicity in Men possessed of them all, Ver. 267, etc.*
VII. *That Virtue only constitutes a Happiness, whose object is universal, and whose prospect eternal, Ver. 307, etc. That the perfection of Virtue and Happiness consists in a conformity to the ORDER of PROVIDENCE here, and a Resignation to it here and hereafter, Ver. 326, etc.*

EPISTLE IV.

OH HAPPINESS! our being's end and aim!
Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content! whate'er thy
name:

That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,
For which we bear to live, or dare to die,

VARIATIONS.

VER. 1. *Oh Happiness! etc.*] In the MS. thus,

Oh Happiness! to which we all aspire,
Wing'd with strong hope, and borne by full desire;
That ease, for which in want, in wealth we sigh;
That ease, for which we labour and we die.

COMMENTARY.

THE two foregoing epistles having considered Man with regard to the MEANS (that is, in all his relations, whether as an Individual, or a Member of *Society*) this last comes to consider him with regard to the END, that is, *Happiness*.

It opens with an Invocation to HAPPINESS, in the manner of the ancient Poets; who, when destitute of a patron God, applied to the Muse; and if she was not at leisure, took up with any simple Virtue next at hand, to inspire and prosper their undertakings. This was the ancient Invocation, which few modern Poets have had the art to imitate with any degree either of spirit or decorum: but our Author hath contrived to make *his* subservient to the method and reasoning of his philosophic composition. I will endeavour to explain so uncommon beauty.

It is to be observed that the pagan Deities had each their several *names* and *places of abode*; with some of which they were supposed to be more delighted than others; and consequently to be then most propitious when invoked by the favourite name and place: Hence we find, the hymns of Homer, Orpheus, and Callimachus to be chiefly employed in reckoning up the several

Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies,
 O'erlook'd, seen double, by the fool, and wise.
 Plant of celestial seed! if dropt below,
 Say, in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow?
 Fair op'ning to some Court's propitious shine,
 Or deep with di'monds in the flaming mine?
 Twin'd with the wreaths Parnassian laurels yield,
 Or reap'd in iron harvests of the field?

COMMENTARY.

titles and habitations by which the patron God was known and distinguished. Our Poet hath made these two circumstances serve to introduce his subject. His purpose is to write of *Happiness*; method therefore requires that he first define what men mean by *Happiness*; and this he does in the ornament of a poetic Invocation: in which the several names, that *Happiness* goes by, are enumerated.

"Oh Happiness! our being's end and aim!

"Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content! whate'er thy NAME."

After the DEFINITION, that which follows next, is the PROPOSITION, which is, *that human Happiness consists not in external Advantages, but in Virtue*. For the subject of this epistle is to detect the *false* notions of Happiness, and to settle and explain the *true*; and this, the Poet lays down in the next sixteen lines. Now the enumeration of the several *situations* where Happiness is supposed to reside, is a summary of *false* Happiness placed in Externals:

"Plant of celestial seed! if dropt below,

"Say, in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow?

"Fair op'ning to some Court's propitious shine,

"Or deep with Di'monds in the flaming mine?

"Twin'd with the wreaths Parnassian laurels yield,

"Or reap'd in iron harvests of the field?"

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VER. 6. *O'erlook'd, seen double, etc.*] *O'erlook'd* by those who place happiness in any thing exclusive of virtue; *seen double* by those who admit any thing else to have a share with Virtue in procuring Happiness; these being the two general Mistakes which this epistle is employed to confute.

Where grows?—where grows it not? If vain our toil,
We ought to blame the culture, not the soil:

Fix'd to no spot is Happiness sincere, 15

'Tis no where to be found, or ev'ry where:

'Tis never to be bought, but always free,

And fled from monarchs, ST. JOHN! dwells with thee.

Ask of the Learn'd the way? The Learn'd are
blind;

This bids to serve, and that to shun mankind; 20

Some place the bliss in action, some in ease,

Those call it Pleasure, and Contentment these;

COMMENTARY.

The six remaining lines deliver the *true* notion of Happiness, and shew that it is rightly placed in Virtue. Which is summoned up in these two:

“Fix'd to no spot is Happiness sincere;

“'Tis no where to be found, or ev'ry where.”

The Poet having thus defined his terms, and laid down his proposition, proceeds to the support of his Thesis; the various arguments of which make up the body of the Epistle.

VER. 19. *Ask of the Learn'd, etc.*] He begins (from Ver. 18 to 29.) with detecting the false notions of Happiness. These are of two kinds, the *Philosophical* and *Popular*: The popular he had recapitulated in the invocation, when Happiness was called upon, at her several supposed places of abode: the philosophical only remained to be delivered:

“Ask of the Learn'd the way? the Learn'd are blind;

“This bids to serve, and that to shun Mankind;

“Some place the bliss in action, some in ease;

“Those call it Pleasure, and Contentment these.”

They differed as well in the *means*, as in the nature of the *end*. Some plac'd Happiness in Action, some in

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VER. 21, 23, *Some place the bliss in action—
Some sunk to beasts, etc.*]

1. Those who place Happiness, or the *summum bonum*, in Pleasure, *ἡδονή*; such as the Cyrenaic sect, called, on that account, the Hedonic. 2. Those who place it

Some sunk to Beasts, find pleasure end in pain :
 Some swell'd to Gods, confess ev'n virtue vain !
 Or indolent, to each extreme they fall,
 To trust in ev'ry thing, or doubt of all.

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Who thus define it, say they more or less
 'Than this, that Happiness is Happiness ?

COMMENTARY.

Contemplation ; the first called it Pleasure, the second Ease. Of those who placed it in Action and called it Pleasure, the rout they pursued either sunk them into *sensual Pleasures*, which ended in *Pain* ; or led them in search of *imaginary Perfections*, unsuitable to their nature and station, (see Ep. 1.) which ended in *Vanity*. Of those who placed it in Ease, the contemplative station they were fixed in, made some, for their quiet, find truth in *every thing* ; others in *nothing*.

“ Who thus define it, say they more or less

“ Than this, that Happiness is Happiness ? ”

NOTES.

in a certain tranquillity or calmness of Mind, which they call *Eὐθυμία*, such as the Democritic sect. 3. The Epicurean. 4. The Stoic. 5. The Protagorean, which held that Man was πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον, *the Measure of all things* ; for that all things which appear to him, are, and those things which appear not to any Man, are not ; so that every imagination or opinion of every Man was true. 6. The Sceptic : Whose absolute doubt is, with great Judgment, said to be the effect of Indolence, as well as the absolute trust of the Protagorean : For the same dread of labour attending the search of truth, which makes the Protagorean presume it is always at hand, makes the Sceptic conclude it is never to be found. The only difference is, that the laziness of the one is desponding, and the laziness of the other sanguine ; yet both can give it a good name, and call it HAPPINESS.

VER. 23. *Some sunk to Beasts, etc.*] These four lines added in the last Edition, as necessary to complete the summary of the false pursuits after Happiness among the Greek Philosophers.

Take Nature's path, and mad Opinion's leave;
 All states can reach it, and all heads conceive; 30
 Obvious her goods, in no extreme they dwell;
 There needs but thinking right, and meaning well;
 And mourn our various portions as we please,
 Equal is Common Sense, and Common Ease.

Remember, Man, "the Universal Cause 35
 "Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws:"

COMMENTARY.

The confutation of these Philosophic errors, he shews to be very easy, one common fallacy running through them all; namely this, that instead of telling us in what the happiness of *human nature* consists, which was what was asked of them, each busies himself in explaining in what he placed *his own*.

VER. 29. *Take Nature's path, etc.*] The Poet then proceeds (from Ver. 28 to 35.) to reform their mistakes; and shews them that, if they will but take the road of Nature and leave that of mad Opinion, they will soon find Happiness to be a good of the *species*, and, like Common Sense, equally distributed to all mankind.

VER. 35. *Remember, Man, etc.*] Having exposed the two false species of Happiness, the *Philosophical* and *Popular*, and denounced the true; in order to establish the last, he goes on to a confutation of the two former.

NOTES.

VER. 35. *Remember, Man, "the Universal Cause
 "Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws."*

I reckon it for nothing that M. Du Resnel saw none of the fine reasoning (from these two lines, to Ver. 73.) in which the Poet confutes both the *philosophic* and *popular* errors concerning happiness. What I can least bear is his perverting these two lines to a horrid and senseless *fatalism*, foreign to the argument in hand, and directly contrary to the Poet's general principles.

———"Une loi generale

"Determine toujours la cause principale."

i. e. a general Law always determines the first Cause: which is the very Fate of the Ancient Pagans; who sup-

And makes what Happiness we justly call
 Subsist not in the good of one, but all.
 There's not a blessing Individuals find,
 But some way leans and hearkens to the kind;
 No Bandit fierce, no Tyrant mad with pride,
 No cavern'd Hermit, rests self-satisfy'd :
 Who most to shun or hate Mankind pretend,
 Seek an admirer, or would fix a friend :
 Abstract what others feel, what others think,
 All pleasures sicken, and all glories sink :
 Each has his share! and who would more obtain,
 Shall find, the pleasure pays not half the pain.

COMMENTARY.

1. He first (from Ver. 34 to 49) confutes the *Philosophical*; which, as we said, makes happiness a particular, not a general good: And this two ways; 1. From his grand principle, that God acts by general laws; the consequence of which is, that happiness, which supports the well being of every system, must needs be universal; and not partial, as the Philosophers conceived.
 2. From fact, that man instinctively concurs with this designation of Providence, to make happiness universal, by his having no delight in any thing uncommunicated or uncommunicable.

NOTES.

posed that the *Destinies* gave law to the *Father of Gods and men*. The Poet says, again, soon after, Ver. 49. "Order is Heav'n's first Law,"—i. e. *the first Law made by God relates to Order*: Which is a beautiful allusion to the Scripture-history of the Creation, when God first appeased the disorders of Chaos, and separated the light from the darkness. Let us now hear his Translator:

"L'Ordre, cet inflexible et grand Législateur,

"Qui des decrets du ciel est le premier Auteur."

Order, that inflexible and grand Legislator, who is the first Author of the Law of Heaven. A proposition abominable in most senses; absurd in all.

ORDER is Heav'n's first law; and this confess,
 Some are, and must be, greater than the rest, 50
 More rich, more wise; but who infers from hence
 That such are happier, shocks all common sense,
 Heav'n to Mankind impartial we confess,
 If all are equal in their Happiness:
 But mutual wants this Happiness increase; 55
 All Nature's difference keeps all Nature's peace.
 Condition, circumstance is not the thing;
 Bliss is the same in subject or in king,
 In who obtain defence, or who defend,
 In him who is, or him who finds a friend: 60

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 52. in the MS.

Say not, "Heav'n's here profuse, there poorly saves,
 "And for one Monarch makes a thousand slaves."
 You'll find, when Causes and their Ends are known,
 'Twas for the thousand Heav'n has made that one.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 49. *Order is Heav'n's first Law*;] II. In the second place (from Ver. 48 to 67.) he confutes the popular error concerning happiness, namely, that it consists in externals: This he does, *first*, by inquiring into the reasons of the present providential disposition of external goods: A topic of confutation chosen with the greatest accuracy and penetration: For, if it appears they were given in the manner we see them distributed, for reasons different from the happiness of individuals, it is absurd to think that they should make part of that happiness. He shews therefore that disparity of external possessions among men, was for the sake of Society:

1. To promote the harmony and happiness of a system; because the want of external goods in some, and the abundance in others, increase general harmony in the obli-ger and obli-ged. Yet here (says he) mark the im-partial wisdom of Heaven; this very inequality of ex-ternals, by contributing to general harmony and order, produceth an equality of happiness amongst Individuals.
2. To prevent perpetual discord amongst men equal in power; which an equal distribution of external goods would necessarily occasion. From hence he concludes,

Heav'n breathes through every member of the whole
 One common blessing, as one common soul.
 But Fortune's gifts if each alike possess,
 And each were equal, must not all contest?
 If then to all Men happiness was meant,
 God in Externals could not place Content.

Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,
 And these be happy call'd, unhappy those:
 But Heav'n's just balance equal will appear,
 While those are plac'd in Hope, and these in Fear:
 Not present good or ill, the joy or curse,
 But future views of better, or of worse.

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 66. in the MS.

'Tis peace of mind alone is at a stay:
 The rest mad Fortune gives or takes away.
 All other bliss by accident's debar'd;
 But Virtue's, in the instant, a reward;
 In hardest trials operates the best,
 And more is relish'd as the more distress.

COMMENTARY.

that as external goods were not given for the Reward of virtue, but for many different purposes, God could not, if he intended happiness for all, place it in the enjoyment of externals.

VER. 67. *Fortune her gifts may variously dispose, etc.*
 His second argument (from Ver. 66 to 73.) against the popular error of happiness being placed in externals, is, that the possession of them is inseparably attended with fear; the want of them with hope; which directly crossing all their pretensions to making happy, evidently shews that God had placed happiness elsewhere. And hence, in concluding this argument, he takes occasion (from Ver. 72 to 77.) to upbraid the desperate folly and impiety of those, who, in spite of God and Nature, will yet attempt to place happiness in externals:

"Oh sons of earth! attempt ye still to rise,
 "By mountains pil'd on mountains to the skies?
 "Heav'n still with laughter the vain toil surveys,
 "And buries madmen in the heaps they raise."

Oh sons of earth! attempt ye still to rise,
By mountains pil'd on mountains, to the skies?
Heav'n still with laughter the vain toil surveys,
And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.

75

Know, all the good that individuals find,
Or God and Nature meant to mere Mankind,
Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of Sense,
Lie in three words, Health, Peace, and Competence.

But Health consists with Temperance alone;

81

And Peace, oh Virtue! Peace is all thy own.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 77. *Know, all the good, etc.*] The Poet having thus confuted the two errors concerning happiness, the *Philosophical* and *Popular*; and proved that true happiness was neither solitary and partial, nor yet placed in externals; goes on (from Ver. 76 to 83.) to shew in what it doth consist. He had before said in general, and repeated it, that happiness lay in common to the whole species. He now brings us better acquainted with it, in a more explicit account of its nature; and tells us, it is all contained in *health, peace, and competence*; but that these are to be gained only by VIRTUE, namely, by temperance, innocence, and industry.

NOTES.

VER. 79. *Reason's whole pleasure, etc.*] This is a beautiful periphrasis for Happiness; for all we feel of good is by *sensation* and *reflection*. But the Translator, who seem'd little to concern himself with the Poet's philosophy or argument, mistook this description of *happiness* for a description of the *intellectual and sensitive faculties, opposed to one another*; and therefore turns it thus,

“ Le charme séducteur, dont s'enivrant les sens,

“ Les plaisirs de l'esprit, encore plus ravissans:”

and so, with the highest absurdity, not only makes the Poet constitute *sensual excesses* a part of human happiness, but likewise the product of Virtue.

Ver. 82. *And Peace, etc.*] *Conscious innocence* (says the Poet) is the only source of *internal peace*; and known

The good or bad the gifts of Fortune gain;
 But these less taste them, as they worse obtain.
 Say, in pursuit of Profit or Delight, 85
 Who risk the most, that take wrong Means or right?
 Of Vice or Virtue, whether blest or curst,
 Which meets contempt, or which compassion first?
 Count all th' advantage prosp'rous Vice attains,
 'Tis but what Virtue flies from and disdains: 90
 And grant the bad what happiness they wou'd.
 One they must want, which is to pass for good.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 83. *The good or bad, etc.*] Hitherto the Poet hath only considered *health* and *peace*:

"But Health consists with Temperance alone;

"And Peace, oh Virtue! Peace is all thy own."

One head yet remained to be spoken to, namely, *competence*. In the pursuit of health and peace there is no danger of running into excess; but the case is different with regard to competence: here wealth and affluence would be apt to be mistaken for it, in men's passionate pursuit after *external* goods. To obviate this mistake therefore, the Poet shews (from Ver. 82 to 93.) that, as exorbitant wealth adds nothing to the happiness arising from a *competence*; so, as it is generally ill gotten, it is attended with circumstances which weaken another part of this triple cord, namely, *peace*.

"Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of Sense,

"Lie in three words, Health, Peace, and Competence.

"But Health consists with Temperance alone;

"And Peace, oh Virtue! Peace is all thy own."

NOTES.

innocence, of *external*; therefore, peace is the sole issue of virtue; or, in his own emphatic words, *peace is all thy own*; a conclusive observation in his argument; which stands thus: Is happiness rightly placed in externals? No; for it consists in health, peace, and competence. Health and competence are the product of temperance; and peace of perfect innocence.

Oh blind to truth, and God's whole scheme below,
Who fancy bliss to Vice, to Virtue Woe!

Who sees and follows that great scheme the best, 95
Best knows the blessing, and will most be blest.

But fools, the Good alone, unhappy call,
For ills or accidents that chance to all.

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 92. in the MS.

Let sober Moralists correct their speech,
No bad man's happy: he is great or rich.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 93. *Oh blind to truth, etc.*] Our Author having thus largely confuted the mistake, that happiness consists in externals, proceeds to expose the terrible consequences of such an opinion, on the sentiments and practice of all sorts of men; making the *Dissolute*, impious and atheistical; the *Religious*, uncharitable and intolerant; and the *Good*, restless and discontent. For when it is once taken for granted, that happiness consists in externals, it is immediately seen that ill men are often more happy than the Good; which sets all conditions on objecting to the ways of Providence: and some even on rashly attempting to rectify its dispensations, though by the violation of all laws, divine and human. Now this being the most important part of the subject under consideration, is deservedly treated most at large. And here it will be proper to take notice of the art of the Poet in making this confutation serve, at the same time for a full solution of all objections which might be made to his main proposition, *that happiness consists not in externals*.

I. He begins, first of all, with the atheistical complainers; and pursues their impiety from Ver. 92 to 131.

"Oh blind to truth! and God's whole scheme below," etc.

VER. 97. *But fools, the Good alone, unhappy call, etc.*] He exposes their folly, even on their own notions of external goods.

1. By examples (from Ver. 98 to 111.) where he shews, *first*, that if good men have been untimely cut off, this is not to be ascribed to their virtue, but to a con-

See FALKLAND dies, the virtuous and the just !
 See God-like TURENNE prostrate on the dust ! 100
 See SIDNEY bleeds amid the martial Strife !
 Was this their Virtue, or Contempt of Life ?
 Say, was it Virtue, more tho' Heav'n ne'er gave,
 Lamented DIGBY ! sunk thee to the grave ?
 Tell me, if Virtue made the Son expire, 105
 Why, full of days and honour, lives the Sire ?
 Why drew Marseilles' good bishop purer breath,
 When Nature sicken'd, and each gale was death ?
 Or why so long (in life if long can be)
 Lent Heav'n a parent to the poor and me ? 110

COMMENTARY.

tempt of life, which hurried them into dangers. *Secondly*, That if they will still persist in ascribing untimely death to virtue, they must needs, on the same principle, ascribe long life to it also; consequently as the argument, in fact, concludes both ways, in logic it concludes neither.

" Say, was it Virtue, more tho' Heav'n ne'er gave,

" Lamented Digby ! sunk thee to the grave ?

" Tell me if Virtue made the Son expire,

" Why full of days and honour, lives the Sire ?

NOTES.

VER. 100. *See god-like TURENNE*] This epithet has a peculiar justness; the great man to whom it is applied not being distinguished, from other generals, for any of his superior qualities, so much as for his providential care of those whom he led to war; in which he was so intent, that his chief purpose in taking on himself the command of armies, seems to have been the preservation of mankind. In this *god-like* care he was more remarkably employed throughout the whole course of that famous campaign in which he lost his life.

VER. 110. *Lent Heav'n a parent, etc.*] This last instance of the Poet's illustration of the ways of Providence, the reader sees, has a peculiar elegance; where a tribute of piety to a parent is paid in a return of thanks to, and made subservient of his vindication of, the great Giver and Father of all things. The Mother of the

What makes all physical or moral ill?
 There deviates Nature, and here wanders Will.
 God sends not ill; if rightly understood,
 Or partial ill is universal Good,
 Or Change admits, or Nature lets it fall;
 Short, and but rare, till Man improv'd it all.
 We just as wisely might of Heav'n complain
 That righteous Abel was destroy'd by Cain,
 As that the virtuous son is ill at ease,
 When his lewd father gave the dire disease.

115

120

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 116. in the MS.

Of ev'ry evil, since the world began,
 The real source is not in God, but man.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 111. *What makes all physical or moral ill?*
 2. He exposes their folly (from Ver. 110 to 131.) by considerations drawn from the system of Nature; and these twofold, natural and moral. You accuse God, says he, because the good man is subject to natural and moral evil: Let us see whence these proceed: Natural evil is the necessary consequence of a material world so constituted: But that this constitution was best, we have proved in the first Epistle. Moral evil ariseth from the depraved will of Man: Therefore neither one nor the other from God. But you say, (adds the Poet, to these impious complainers) that though it be fit Man should suffer the miseries which he brings upon himself, by the commission of moral evil; yet it seems unfit that his innocent posterity should bear a share of the burthen. To this, says he, I reply,

"We just as wisely might of Heav'n complain
 "That righteous Abel was destroy'd by Cain,
 "As that the virtuous son is ill at ease,
 "When his lewd father gave the dire disease."

NOTES.

Author, a person of great piety and charity, died the year this poem was finished, viz. 1733-

'Think we, like some weak Prince, th' Eternal Cause,
Prone for his fav'rites to reverse his laws?

Shall burning Etna, if a sage requires,
Forget to thunder and recall her fires?
On air or sea new motions be impress'd,
Oh blameless Bethel! to relieve thy breast?
When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
Shall gravitation cease if you go by?
Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,
For Chartres' head reserve the hanging wall?

But still this world (so fitted for the knave)
Contents us not. A better shall we have?

COMMENTARY.

But you will still say, Why doth not God either prevent, or immediately repair these evils? You may as well ask why he doth not work continual miracles, and every moment reverse the established laws of Nature:

"Shall burning Etna, if a sage requires," etc.

This is the force of the Poet's reasoning; and these the men to whom he addresseth it; namely, the libertine cavillers against Providence.

VER. 131. *But still this world, etc.*] II. But now, so unhappy is the condition of our corrupt nature, that these are not the only complainers. RELIGIOUS men are but too apt, if not to speak out, yet sometimes secretly to murmur against Providence; and say, *its ways are not equal*: Those especially, who are more inordi-

NOTES.

VER. 121. *Think we, like some weak Prince, etc.*] Agreeable hereunto, holy Scripture, in its account of things under the common Providence of Heaven, never represents miracles as wrought for the sake of him who is the object of them, but in order to give credit to some of God's extraordinary dispensations to Mankind.

VER. 123. *Shall burning Etna, etc.*] Alluding to the fate of those two great Naturalists, Empedocles and Pliny, who both perished by too near an approach to Etna and Vesuvius, while they were exploring the cause of their eruptions.

A kingdom of the Just then let it be :

But first consider how those Just agree.

The good must merit God's peculiar care ;

135

But who, but God, can tell us who they are ?

One thinks on Calvin Heav'n's own spirit fell ;

Another deems him instrument of hell ;

COMMENTARY.

nately devoted to a sect or party, are scandalized, that the *Just* (for such they esteem themselves) the *Just* who are to judge the world, have no better a portion in their own inheritance and dominion : The Poet therefore now leaves those more professedly impious, and turns to these less profligate complainers (from Ver. 130 to 149.)

" But still this world (so fitted for the knave)" etc.

As the former wanted external goods to be the reward of virtue for the moral man ; so These want them for the pious, in order to have a *kingdom of the Just* : To this the Poet holds it sufficient to answer ; Pray first agree among yourselves, who those *Just* are. As they are not likely to do this, he bids them to rest satisfied ; to remember his fundamental principle, that *whatever is, is right* ; and to content themselves (as their religion teaches them to profess a more than ordinary submission to the will of Providence) with that common answer which he, with so much reason and piety, gives to every kind of complainer.

However, though there be yet no *kingdom of the Just*, there is still no kingdom of the Unjust ; both the virtuous and the vicious (whatsoever becomes of those whom every sect calls the *Faithful*) have their share in external goods ; and what is more, the virtuous have infinitely the most enjoyment of their share.

" This world, 'tis true,

" Was made for Cæsar—but for Titus too :

" And which more blest ? who chain'd his country ? say,

" Or he whose Virtue sigh'd to lose a day ?"

I have been the more solicitous to explain this last argument, and to shew *against whom* it is directed, because a great deal depends upon it for the illustration of the

If Calvin feel Heav'n's blessing, or its rod,
 This cries, there is, and that, there is no God. 140
 What shocks one part will edify the rest,
 Nor with one system can they all be blest.
 'The very best will variously incline,
 And what rewards your virtue, punish mine.
 WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT. — This world, 'tis true,
 Was made for Cæsar—but for Titus too : 146
 And which more blest? who chain'd his country? say,
 Or he whose Virtue sigh'd to lose a day?
 " But sometimes Virtue starves, while Vice is fed."
 What then? Is the reward of Virtue bread? 150

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 142. in some Editions,

Give each a System, all must be at strife;
 What different Systems for a Man and Wife?

The joke, though lively, was ill placed, and therefore struck out of the text.

COMMENTARY.

sense, and the defence of the Poet's reasoning. For if we suppose him to be still addressing himself to those IMPIOUS complainers, confuted in the forty preceding lines, we should make him guilty of a paralogism, in the argument about the Just; and in the illustration of it by the case of Calvin. For then the Libertine asks, Why the Just, that is, the *moral man*, is not rewarded? The answer is, That none but God can tell, who the Just, that is, the *faithful man*, is. Where the Term is changed, in order to support the argument; for about the truly moral man there is no dispute; about the truly faithful, or the orthodox, a great deal. But take the Poet right, as arguing here against RELIGIOUS complainers, and the reasoning is strict and logical. They ask, Why the truly faithful are not rewarded? He answereth, " They may be, for aught you know; for none but " God can tell who they are."

VER. 149. " But sometimes Virtue starves, while Vice is fed."] III. The Poet, having dispatched these two species of murmurers, comes now to the third, and

That, Vice may merit, 'tis the price of toil;
 The knave deserves it when he tills the soil,
 The knave deserves it when he tempts the main,
 Where Folly fights for kings, or dives for gain.
 The good man may be weak, be indolent; 155
 Nor is his claim to plenty, but content.
 But grant him riches, your demand is o'er?
 "No—shall the good want Health, the good want
 Pow'r?"
 Add Health, and Pow'r, and ev'ry earthly thing.
 "Why bounded Pow'r? why private? why no
 king?" 160
 Nay, why external for internal giv'n?
 Why is not Man a God, and Earth a Heav'n?
 Who ask and reason thus, will scarce conceive
 God gives enough, while he has more to give:
 Immense the pow'r, immense were the demand; 165
 Say, at what part of nature will they stand?

COMMENTARY.

still more pardonable sort, *the discontented GOOD MEN*, who lament only that Virtue starves, while Vice riots. To these he replies (from Ver. 148 to 157.) that, admit this to be the case, yet they have no reason to complain, either of the good man's lot in particular, or of the dispensation of Providence in general. Not of the former, because Happiness, the reward of Virtue, consisteth not in externals; nor of the latter, because ill men may gain wealth by commendable industry; good men want necessities through indolence or ill conduct.

VER. 157. *But grant him riches, etc.*] But as modest as this complaint seemeth at first view, the Poet next shews (from Ver. 156 to 167.) that it is founded on a principle of the highest *extravagance*, which will never let the discontented good man rest, till he becomes as vain and foolish in his imagination as the very worst sort of complainers. For that when once he begins to think he wants what is his due, he will never know where to stop, while God hath any thing to give.

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
 The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy,
 Is Virtue's prize: A better would you fix?
 Then give Humility a coach and fix, 170
 Justice a Conqu'ror's sword, or Truth a gown,
 Or Public Spirit its great cure, a Crown.
 Weak, foolish man! will Heav'n reward us there
 With the same trash mad mortals wish for here?
 The Boy and Man an Individual makes, 175
 Yet sigh'st thou now for apples and for cakes?
 Go, like the Indian, in another life
 Expect thy dog, thy bottle, and thy wife:
 As well as dream such trifles are assign'd,
 As toys and empires for a god-like mind. 180

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 172. in the MS.

Say, what rewards this idle world imparts,
 Or fit for searching heads or honest hearts.

COMMENTARY.

Ver. 167. *What nothing earthly gives, etc.*] But this is not all; the Poet sheweth next (from Ver. 166 to 185.) that these demands are not only unreasonable, but in the highest degree absurd, likewise. For that those very goods, if granted, would be the destruction of that Virtue for which they are demanded as a reward. He concludes therefore, on the whole, that

"What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
 "The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy,
 "Is Virtue's prize—"

And that to aim at other, which not only is of no use to us here, but, what is more, will be of none hereafter, is a passion like that of an Infant or a Savage; where the one is impatient for what he will soon despise; and the other makes a provision for what he can never want.

NOTES.

VER. 177. *Go, like the Indian, etc.*] Alluding to the example of the Indian, in Epist. 1. Ver. 99. which shews, that that example was not given to discredit any

Rewards, that either would to Virtue bring
 No joy, or be destructive of the thing :
 How oft by these at sixty are undone
 The virtues of a saint at twenty-one !
 To whom can Riches give Repute, or Trust, 185
 Content, or Pleasure, but the Good and Just ?
 Judges and Senates have been bought for gold,
 Esteem and Love were never to be sold.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 185. *To whom can Riches give Repute or Trust.*]

The Poet now enters more at large upon the matter :
 And still continuing his discourse to this third sort of com-
 plainers (whom he indulgeth, as much more pardonable
 than the first or second, in rectifying all their doubts and
 mistakes) he proves, both from reason and example, how
 unable any of those things are, which the world most
 admires, to make a good man happy. For as to the Phi-
 losophic mistakes concerning happiness, there being little
 danger of their making a general impression, he had,
 after a short confutation, dismissed them for altogether.
 But external goods are those Syrens, which so bewitch
 the world with dreams of happiness, that it is of all
 things the most difficult to awaken it out of its delusions ;
 though, as he proves in an exact review of the most pre-
 tending, they dishonour bad men, and add no lustre to
 the good——That it is only this third, and least criminal
 sort of complainers, against whom the remaining part
 of the discourse is directed, appeareth from the Poet's
 so frequently addressing himself, henceforward, to his
 friend.

I. He beginneth therefore (from Ver. 184 to 205.)
 with considering RICHES. 1. He examines first, what
 there is of real use or enjoyment in them ; and sheweth
 they can give the good man only that very contentment

NOTES.

rational hopes of future happiness, but only to reprove
 the folly of separating them from Charity : as when,

“ —Zeal, not Charity, became the guide,

“ And Hell was built on spite, and Heav'n on pride.”

Oh fool! to think God hates the worthy mind,
 The lover and the love of human-kind, 190
 Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear,
 Because he wants a thousand pounds a year.

Honour and shame from no Condition rise;
 Act well your part, there all the honour lies,
 Fortune in Men has some small diff'rence made, 195
 One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade;
 The cobbler apron'd, and the Parson gown'd,
 The frier hooded, and the monarch crown'd.
 "What differ more (you cry) than crown and cowl?"
 I'll tell you, friend! a wise man and a fool. 200

COMMENTARY.

in himself, and that very esteem and love from others, which he had before: And scornfully cries out to those of a different opinion,

"Oh fool! to think God hates the worthy mind,
 "The *lover* and the *love* of human-kind,
 "Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear;
 "Because he wants a thousand pounds a year!"

2. He next examines the imaginary value of Riches, as the fountain of Honour. For the objection of his adversaries standeth thus:—As *honour* is the genuine claim of virtue; and *shame* the just retribution of vice; and as honour, in their opinion, follows riches; and shame, poverty; therefore the good man should be *rich*. He tells them in this they are much mistaken:

"Honour and shame from no Condition rise;
 "Act well your part, there all the honour lies."

What power then has Fortune over the Man? None at all; for as her favours can confer neither worth nor wisdom; so neither can her displeasure cure him of any of his follies. On his *garb*, indeed, she hath some little influence; but his *heart* still remains the same:

"Fortune in Men has some small diff'rence made,
 "One *flaunts* in rags, one *flutters* in brocade."

So that this difference extends no further than to the habit; the pride of heart is the same both in the *flaunter* and the *flutterer*; as it is the Poet's intention to insinuate by the use of those terms.

You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,
 Or, cobbler-like, the parson will be drunk,
 Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
 The rest is all but leather or prunella. 204

Stuck o'er with titles, and hung round with strings,
 That thou may'st be by kings, or whores of kings,
 Boast the pure blood of an illustrious race,
 In quiet flow from Lucrece to Lucrece:
 But by your father's worth if your's you rate,
 Count me those only who were good and great. 210
 Go! if your ancient, but ignoble blood
 Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood,
 Go! and pretend your family is young;
 Nor own your fathers have been fools so long.
 What can ennoble fots, or slaves, or cowards? 215
 Alas! not all the blood of all the HOWARDS.

Look next on Greatness; say where Greatness lies!
 "Where, but among the Heroes, and the Wife?"

VARIATIONS.

VER. 207. *Boast the pure blood, etc.*] In the MS. thus,

The richest blood, right honourably old,
 Down from Lucretia to Lucretia roll'd,
 May swell thy heart and gallop in thy breast,
 Without one dash of usher or of priest:
 Thy pride as much despise all other pride
 As Christ-Church once all colleges beside.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 205. *Stuck o'er with titles, etc.*] II. Then as to NOBILITY, by creation or birth; this too the Poet shews (from Ver. 204 to 217.) is in itself as devoid of all real worth as the rest; because in the first case, the Honour is generally gained by no merit at all; in the second by the merit of the first Founder of the Family; which, when well considered, is generally the subject rather of humiliation than of glory.

VER. 217. *Look next on Greatness, etc.*] III. The Poet now unmasks (from Ver. 216 to 237.) the false pretences of GREATNESS, whereby it is seen that the Hero and the Politician (the two characters which would monopolize that quality) do, after all their bustle, if

Heroes are much the same, the point's agreed,
 From Macedonia's Madman to the Swede; 220
 The whole strange purpose of their lives, to find
 Or make, an enemy of all mankind!
 Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,
 Yet ne'er looks forward, further than his nose.
 No less alike the Politic and Wise; 225
 All fly slow things, with circumspective eyes:
 Men in their loose unguarded hours they take,
 Not that themselves are wise, but others weak.
 But grant that those can conquer, these can cheat:
 'Tis phrase absurd to call a Villain great: 230
 Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,
 Is but the more a fool, the more a knave.
 Who noble ends by noble means obtains,
 Or failing smiles in exile or in chains,
 Like good Aurelius let him reign, or bleed 235
 Like Socrates, that Man is great indeed.

COMMENTARY.

they want Virtue, effect only this, that the one proves himself a Fool, and the other a Knave: And Virtue they but too generally want; the art of Heroism being understood to consist in Ravage and Desolation; and the art of Politicks, in Circumvention.

It is not success therefore, that constitutes true greatness; but the end aimed at, and the means which are employed: And if these be right, Glory will follow as the reward, whatever happens to be the issue:

"Who noble ends by noble means obtains,

"Or failing, smiles in exile or in chains,

"Like good Aurelius let him reign or bleed

"Like Socrates, that man is great indeed."

NOTES.

VER. 222.—*an enemy of all mankind!*] Had all nations, with regard to their HEROES, been of the humour with the Normans, who called Robert II. the greatest of their Dukes, by the name of ROBERT THE DEVIL, the Races of HEROES might have been less numerous, or however less mischievous.

What's Fame? a fancy'd life in others breath,
 A thing beyond us, ev'n before our death.
 Just what you hear, you have, and what's unknown
 The same (my Lord) if Tully's or your own, 240
 All that we feel of it begins and ends
 In the small circle of our foes or friends;
 To all beside as much an empty shade
 An Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead:
 Alike or when, or where, they shone, or shine, 245
 Or on the Rubicon, or on the Rhine.
 A Wit's a feather, and a Chief a rod;
 An honest Man's the noblest work of God.
 Fame but from death a villain's name can save,
 As Justice tears his body from the grave; 250
 When what t' oblivion better were resign'd,
 Is hung on high, to poison half mankind.
 All fame is foreign, but of true desert;
 Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart;
 One self-approving hour whole years outweighs 255
 Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas;
 And more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels,
 Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 237. *What's Fame?*] IV. With regard to FAME that still more fantastic blessing, he sheweth (from Ver. 236 to 259.) that all of it, besides what we hear ourselves, is merely nothing: and that even of this small portion, no more of it giveth the Possessor a real satisfaction, than what is the fruit of Virtue. Thus he shews, that Honour, Nobility, Greatness, Glory, so far as they have any thing real and substantial, that is, so far as they contribute to the happiness of the possessor, are the sole issue of Virtue; and that neither Riches, Courts, Armies, nor the Populace, are capable of conferring them.

VER. 259. *In Parts superior what advantage lies?*] V. But lastly, the Poet shews (from Ver. 258 to 269.) that as *no external* goods can make man happy, so neither is it in the power of *all internal*. For that even SUPERIOR PARTS bring no more real happiness to the

In Parts superior what advantage lies?
 Tell (for you can) what is it to be wise? 260
 'Tis but to know how little can be known;
 To see all others faults and feel our own:
 Condemn'd in business or in arts to drudge,
 Without a second, or without a judge:
 Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land? 265
 All fear, none aid you, and few understand.
 Painful preheminance! your self to view
 Above life's weakness, and its comforts too.

COMMENTARY.

possessor than the rest; nay, that they put him into a worse condition; for that the quickness of apprehension and depth of penetration do but sharpen the miseries of life.

NOTES.

VER. 267. *Painful preheminance! etc.*] This, to his friend:—nor does it at all contradict what he had said to him concerning Happiness, in the beginning of the epistle:

“ 'Tis never to be bought, but always free,
 “[And fled from Monarchs, St. John! dwells with thee.”

For there he compliments his *virtue*; here he estimates the value of his *politics*, which he calls, *wisdom*. He is now proving, that nothing either external to man, or what is not in man's power, and of his own acquirement, can make him happy here. The most plausible rival of Virtue is human Wisdom: yet even this is so far from giving any degree of real happiness, that it deprives us of those common comforts of life, which are a kind of support, under the want of happiness. Such as the more innocent of those delusions which he speaks of in the second Epistle:

“ Those painted clouds that beautify our days,” etc.

Now Knowledge destroyeth all those comforts, by setting man above life's weaknesses: So that in him, who thinketh to attain happiness by Knowledge alone, independent of Virtue, the fable is reversed, and in a pre-

Bring then these blessings to a strict account:
 Make fair deductions; see to what they mount; 270
 How much of other each is sure to cost;
 How each for other oft is wholly lost;
 How inconsistent greater goods with these;
 How sometimes life is risk'd, and always ease:
 Think, and if still the things thy envy call, 275
 Say, would'st thou be the Man to whom they fall?
 To sigh for ribands if thou art so silly,
 Mark how they grace Lord Umbra, or Sir Billy.
 Is yellow dirt the passion of thy life?
 Look but on Gripus, or on Gripus' wife. 280
 If Parts allure thee, think how Bacon shin'd,
 The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind:

COMMENTARY.

VER. 269. *Bring then these blessings to a strict account, etc.*] Having thus proved how empty and unsatisfactory all these greatest external goods are, from an examination of their nature; he proceeds to strengthen his argument (from Ver. 268 to 309.) by these three further considerations:

1. That the acquirement of these goods is made with the loss of one another, or of greater; either as inconsistent with them, or as spent in attaining them.

2. That the possessors of each of these goods are generally such, as are so far from raising envy in a good man, that he would refuse to take their persons, though accompanied with their possessions: and this the Poet illustrates by examples.

3. That even the possession of them altogether, where they have excluded Virtue, only terminates in more enormous misery.

NOTES.

posterior attempt to gain the substance, he loseth even the shadow. This I take to be the sense of this fine stroke of satire on the wrong pursuits after happiness.

VER. 281, 283. *If Parts allure thee,—*

Or raviſh'd with the whiffling of a Name,]

These two instances are chosen with great judgment. The world, perhaps, doth not afford two such other.

Or ravish'd with the whistling of a Name,
 See Cromwell, damn'd to everlasting fame!
 If all, united, thy ambition call, 285
 From ancient story learn to scorn them all.
 There, in the rich, the honour'd, fam'd, and great,
 See the false scale of happiness complete!
 In hearts of Kings, or arms of Queens who lay,
 How happy! those to ruin, these betray. 290

NOTES.

BACON discovered and laid down those true principles of science, by whose assistance, Newton was enabled to unfold the whole law of Nature. He was no less eminent for the creative power of his imagination; the brightness of his conceptions; and the force of his expression: Yet being convicted on his own confession, for bribery and corruption in the administration of justice, while he presided in the supreme Court of Equity, he endeavoured to repair his ruined fortunes by the most profligate flattery to the Court: Which, indeed, from his very first entrance into it, he had accustomed himself to practise with a prostitution that disgraceth the very profession of letters, or of science.

CROMWELL seemeth to be distinguished in the most eminent manner, with regard to his abilities, from all other great and wicked men, who have overturned the Liberties of their Country. The times in which others have succeeded in this attempt, were such as saw the spirit of Liberty suppressed and stifled, by a general luxury and venality: but Cromwell subdued his country, when this spirit was at its height, by a successful struggle against court-oppression; and while it was conducted and supported by a set of the greatest Geniuses for Government the world ever saw embarked together in one common cause.

VER. 283. *Or ravish'd with the whistling of a Name,*] And even this fantastic glory sometimes suffers a terrible reverse.—*Sacheverel*, in his *Voyage to I-columbkill*, describing the Church there, tells us, that “in one corner is a peculiar inclosure, in which were the monuments of the kings of many different nations, as

Mark by what wretched steps their glory grows,
 From dirt and sea-weed, as proud Venice rose ;
 In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,
 And all that rais'd the Hero, sunk the Man :
 Now Europe's laurels on their brows behold, 295
 But stain'd with blood, or ill exchang'd for gold ,
 Then see them broke with toils, or sunk in ease,
 Or infamous for plunder'd provinces.
 Oh wealth ill-fated ! which no act of fame
 E'er taught to shine, or sanctify'd from shame ! 300
 What greater bliss attends their close of life ?
 Some greedy minion, or imperious wife,
 The trophy'd arches, story'd halls invade,
 And haunt their slumbers in the pompous shade.
 Alas ! not dazzled with their noon-tide ray, 305
 Compute the morn and ev'ning to the day ;
 The whole amount of that enormous fame,
 A Tale, that blends their glory with their shame !
 Know then this truth (enough for Man to know)
 " Virtue alone is happiness below." 310

COMMENTARY.

VER. 309. *Know then this truth, etc.*] Having thus at length shewn that happiness consists neither in external goods of *any* kind, nor in *all* kinds of internal (that is,

NOTES.

" Scotland, Ireland, Norway, and the *Isle of Man*.
 " THIS (said the person who shewed me the place,
 " pointing to a plain stone) was the monument of the
 " Great TEAGUE, King of Ireland. I had never
 " heard of him, and could not but reflect of how little
 " value is *Greatness*, that has barely left a *name* scanda-
 " lous to a nation, and a grave which the meanest of
 " mankind would never envy."

VER. 292. *From dirt and sea-weed*] Avarice and Lust.

VER. 309. *Know then this truth (enough for man to know)*

" *Virtue ALONE is happiness below.*"

M. Du Resnel translates the lines thus,

" Appren donc, qu'il n'est point icy bas de Benheur

" *Si la Vertue regle et l'Esprit et le Cœur.*"

The only point where human bliss stands still,
 And tastes the good without the fall to ill;
 Where only Merit constant pay receives,
 Is blest in what it takes, and what it gives;
 'The joy unequal'd, if its end it gain,
 And if it lose, attended with no pain:
 Without satiety, though e'er so blest'd,
 And but more relish'd as the more distress'd:
 The broadest mirth unfeeling Folly wears,
 Less pleasing far than Virtue's very tears:

315

320

COMMENTARY.

in such of them as are not of our own acquirement) nor yet in the visionary pursuits of the Philosophers, he concludes (from Ver. 308 to 311.) that it is to be found in VIRTUE ALONE.

VER. 311. *The only point where human bliss stands still, etc.*] Hitherto the Poet had proved, NEGATIVELY, that happiness consists in Virtue, by shewing, that it did not consist in any thing else. He now (from Ver. 310 to 327.) proves the same POSITIVELY, by an enumeration of the qualities of Virtue, all naturally adapted to give and to increase human happiness; as its Constancy, Capacity, Vigour, Efficacy, Activity, Moderation, and Self-sufficiency.

NOTES.

i. e. *Learn then, that there is no Happiness here below, unless Virtue regulate the heart and the understanding:* Which destroys all the force of his Author's conclusion. He had proved, that happiness consists neither in external goods, as the Vulgar imagined; nor yet in the visions of the Philosophers: he concludes therefore that it consists in VIRTUE alone. His Translator says, that *without Virtue there can be no Happiness.* And so say the men whom his Author is here confuting. For though they supposed *external* goods requisite to happiness, it was when in conjunction with Virtue. Mr. Pope says,

"VIRTUE ALONE is Happiness below:"

And so ought a faithful Translator to have said after him.

Good, from each object, from each place acquir'd,
 For ever exercis'd, yet never tir'd;
 Never elated, while one man's oppress'd;
 Never dejected, while another's bless'd;
 And where no wants, no wishes can remain,
 Since but to wish more Virtue, is to gain.

325

See the sole bliss Heav'n could on all bestow!
 Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know:
 Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,
 The bad must miss; the good, untaught, will find;

VARIATIONS.

After Ver. 316. in the MS.

Ev'n while it seems unequal to dispose,
 And chequers all the good Man's joys with woes,
 'Tis but to teach him to support each state,
 With patience this, with moderation that;
 And raise his base one that one solid joy,
 Which conscience gives, and nothing can destroy.

These lines are extremely finished. In which there is such a soothing sweetness in the melancholy harmony of the versification, as if the Poet was then in that tender office in which he was most officious, and in which all his soul came out, the condoling with some good man in affliction.

COMMENTARY.

VER. 327. *See the sole bliss Heav'n could on all bestow!*] Having thus proved that happiness is placed in *Virtue*; he proves next (from Ver. 326 to 329.) that it is *rightly* placed there; for that then, and then only, ALL may partake of it, and ALL be capable of relishing it.

VER. 329. *Yet poor with fortune, etc.*] The Poet then, with some indignation, observeth, (from Ver. 328 to 341) that as obvious and as evident as this truth was, yet Riches and false Philosophy had so blinded the discernment even of improved minds, that the possessors of the first, placed happiness in externals, unsuitable to Man's nature; and the followers of the latter, in refined visions, unsuitable to his situation: while the simple-minded man, with NATURE only for his guide, found plainly in what it should be placed.

Slave to no sect, who takes no private road, 331
 But looks through Nature, up to Nature's God;
 Pursues that chain which links th' immense design,
 Joins heav'n and earth, and mortal and divine;
 Sees, that no Being any Bliss can know, 335
 But touches some above, and some below;
 Learns from this union of the rising Whole,
 The first last purpose of the human soul;
 And knows where Faith, Law, Morals, all began,
 All end, in LOVE OF GOD, and LOVE OF MAN. 340
 For him alone, Hope leads from goal to goal,
 And opens still, and opens on his soul;

COMMENTARY.

VER. 341. *For him alone, Hope leads from goal to goal,*] But this is not all; the Author shews further (from Ver. 340 to 353.) that when the simple-minded man, on his first setting out in the pursuit of Truth in order to Happiness, hath had the wisdom

“ To look through Nature up to Nature's God,
 (instead of adhering to any sect or party, where there was so great odds of his chusing wrong) that then the benefit of gaining the knowledge of *God's will written in the mind*, is not confined there; for standing on this sure foundation, he is now no longer in danger of chusing wrong, amidst such diversities of Religions; but by pursuing this grand scheme of universal benevolence, in

NOTES.

VER. 341. *For him alone, Hope leads from goal to goal, etc.*] PLATO in his first book of a Republic, hath a remarkable passage to this purpose. “ He whose conscience does not reproach him, has chearful *Hope*, for his companion, and the support and comfort of his old age, according to Pindar. For this great Poet, “ O Socrates, very elegantly says, That he who leads “ a just and holy life has always amiable *Hope* for his “ companion, which fills his heart with joy, and is “ the support and comfort of his old age. *Hope*, the “ most powerful of the Divinities, in governing the ever- “ changing and inconstant temper of mortal men.”

Till lengthen'd on to FAITH, and unconfin'd,
It pours the blifs that fills up all the mind.
He fees, why Nature plants in Man alone
Hope of known blifs, and Faith in blifs unknown :

345

(Nature whose dictates to no other kind
Are giv'n in vain, but what they seek they find)
Wife is her present ; ſhe connects in this
His greateſt Virtue with his greateſt Blifs
At once his own bright proſpect to be bleſt,
And ſtrongeſt motive to aſſiſt the reſt.

350

Self-love thus push'd to ſocial, to divine,
Gives thee to make thy neighbour's bleſſing thine.

COMMENTARY.

practice as well as theory, he arrives at length to the knowledge of the *revealed will of God*, which is the conſummation of the ſyſtem of benevolence :

“ For him alone, Hope leads from goal to goal,
“ And opens ſtill, and opens on his ſoul ;
“ Till lengthen'd on to FAITH, and unconfin'd,
“ It pours the blifs that fills up all the mind.”

VER. 353. *Self-love thus push'd to ſocial, etc.*] The Poet, in the laſt place, marks out (from Ver. 352 to 373.) the progreſs of his good man's benevolence, puſhed through natural religion to revealed, till it arrives to that height which the ſacred writers deſcribe as the very ſummit of Chriſtian perfection ; and ſhews how the progreſs of *human* differs from the progreſs of *divine* benevolence. That the divine deſcends from *whole* to

NOTES.

Τῷ δὲ μεδὲν-ἑαυτῷ ἄδικον ξυνειδότε ἡδεῖα ἐλπίς αἰεὶ πάρεστι, καὶ ἀγαθὴ γεροτρόφος, ὡς καὶ Πίνδαρος λέγει. Χαριέντως γὰρ τοῖς, ὦ Σώκρατες, τὲτ' ἐκεῖνος εἶπεν, ὅτι ὁς ἂν δικαίως καὶ ὀσίως τὸν βίον διαγάγῃ, γλυκεῖα οἱ καρδίαν ἀτάλλουσα γεροτρόφος συνάροει ἐλπίς, ἡ μάλιστα θνατῶν πολύτροφον γυνάμει κθερυνᾷ. In the ſame manner Euripides ſpeaks in his *Hercules furens*,

Οὐτὸς δ' ἀνὴρ ἄριστος ὅστις ἐλπίσιν

Πέποιθεν αἰεὶ, τὸ δ' ἀπορεῖν, ἀνδρὸς κακῆς. Ver. 105.

“ He is the good man in whoſe *breast Hope ſprings eternally* : But to be *without Hope in the world*, is the portion of the wicked.”

Is this too little for the boundless heart?

355

Extend it, let thy enemies have part:

Grasp the whole worlds of Reason, Life, and Sense,
In one close system of Benevolence:

Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,
And height of Bliss but height of Charity.

360

God loves from Whole to Parts: But human soul
Must rise from Individual to the whole.

Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;

COMMENTARY.

parts; but that the human must rise from *individual* to *universal*. His argument for this extended benevolence is, that, as God has made a Whole, whose parts have a perfect relation to, and an intire dependency on, each other, man, by extending his benevolence throughout that Whole, acts in conformity to the will of his Creator; and therefore this enlargement of his affection becomes a duty. But the Poet hath not only shewn his piety in this observation, but the utmost art and address likewise in the disposition of it. The *Essay on Man* opens with exposing the murmurs and impious conclusions of foolish men against the present constitution of things: as it proceeds, it occasionally detects all those false principles and opinions, which led them to conclude thus perversely. Having now done all that was necessary in speculation, the Author turns to practice; and ends his Essay with the recommendation of an acknowledged Virtue, CHARITY; which, if exercised in that extent which conformity to the will of God requireth, would effectually prevent all complaints against the present order of Nature: such complaints being made with a total disregard to every thing but their *own private system*, and seeking remedy in the disorder, and at the expence of all the rest. This observation,

“Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,”

is important: Rochefoucault, Esprit, and their coarse and wordy disciple Mandeville, had observed, that self-love was the *origin* of all those virtues which Mankind most admire; and therefore foolishly supposed it was the

The centre mov'd, a circle straight succeeds, 365
 Another still, and still another spreads ;
 Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace ;
 His country next ; and next all human race ;
 Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind
 Take ev'ry creature in, of ev'ry kind ; 370
 Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
 And Heav'n beholds its image in its breast.

Come then, my Friend ! my Genius ! come along ;
 Oh master of the Poet, and the song !
 And while the Muse now stoops, or now ascends, 375
 To Man's low passions, or their glorious ends,
 Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,
 To fall with dignity, with temper rise ;

VARIATIONS.

VER. 373. *Come then, my Friend ! etc.*] In the MS. thus,

And now transported o'er so vast a Plain,
 While the wing'd courser flies with all her rein,
 While heav'n-ward now her mounting wing she feels,
 Now scatter'd fools fly trembling from her heels,
 Wilt thou, my ST. JOHN ! keep her course in fight,
 Confine her fury, and assist her flight ?

COMMENTARY.

end likewise : and so taught that the highest pretences to disinterestedness were only the more artful disguises of Self-love. But our Author, who says somewhere or other,

“ Of human Nature, Wit its worst may write,

“ We all revere it in our own despite,” MS.

saw, as well as they, and every body else, that the Passions began in Self-love ; yet he understood human nature better than to imagine that they ended there. He knew that Reason and Religion could convert Selfishness into its very opposite ; and therefore teacheth that

“ Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake :”

and thus hath vindicated the dignity of human Nature, and the philosophic truth of the Christian doctrine.

NOTES.

VER. 373. *Come then, my Friend ! etc.*] This noble apostrophe, by which the Poet concludes the Essay in an address to his friend, will furnish a critic with ex-

Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer
From grave to gay, from lively to severe;

380

NOTES.

amples of every one of those five Species of elocution, from which, as from its sources, Longinus deduceth the **SUBLIME**.*

1. The first and chief is *a grandeur and sublimity of conception*:

"Come then, my Friend! my Genius! come along;

"Oh Master of the Poet, and the Song!

"And while the Muse now stoops, and now ascends,

"To Man's low passions, or their glorious ends,"——

2. The second, that *pathetic enthusiasm*, which, at the same time, melts and inflames:

"Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,

"To fall with dignity, with temper rise;

"Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer

"From grave to gay, from lively to severe;

"Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,

"Intent to reason, or polite to please."

3. *A certain elegant formation and ordonance of figures*:

"Oh while along the stream of Time thy name

"Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,

"Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,

"Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?"

4. *A splendid diction*:

"When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,

"Whose sons shall blush thy fathers were thy foes,

"Shall then this verse to future age pretend

"Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend?

"That urg'd by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art

"From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart;

"For Wit's false mirror held up Nature's light:"

5. And fifthly, which includes in itself all the rest, *a weight and dignity in the composition*:

"Shew'd erring Pride, Whatever is, is RIGHT;

"That REASON, PASSION, answer one great AIM;

"That true SELF-LOVE and SOCIAL are the SAME;

"That VIRTUE only makes our BLISS below;

"And all our Knowledge is, OURSELVES TO KNOW."

* —πάντε πηγαί τιμές εἰσιν τ' ὑψηλοῦς. 1. Πρῶτον μὲν καὶ κρατίστον τὸ περὶ τὰς νοήσεις ἀδριπρόβολον. 2. Διύτερον δὲ τὸ σφοδρὸν καὶ ἐνθουσιαστικὸν πάθος. 3. Ποιὰ τῶν σχημάτων πλάσις. 4. Ἡ γυναιῖα φράσις. 5. Πέμπτη δὲ μεγέθους αἰτία, καὶ συγκλείουσα τὰ πρὸ ἰαυλῆς ἅπαντα, ἢ ἐν ἀξιώματι, καὶ διαρρῶν σύνθεσις.

Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
 Intent to reason, or polite to please.
 Oh! while along the stream of time thy name
 Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame;
 Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
 Pursue the Triumph, and partake the gale?
 When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
 Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
 Shall then this verse to future age pretend
 Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend?
 That urg'd by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art
 From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart;
 For Wit's false mirror held up Nature's light;
 Shew'd erring Pride, **WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT;**

COMMENTARY.

VER. 394. *Shew'd erring Pride, Whatever is, is right;*] The Poet's address to his friend, which concludeth this epistle so nobly, and endeth with a recapitulation of the general argument, affords me the following observation, with which I shall conclude these remarks—There is one great beauty that shines through the whole *Essay*: The Poet, whether he speaks of man as an individual, a member of society, or the subject of happiness, never misseth an opportunity, while he is explaining his state under any of these capacities, to illustrate it in the most artful manner by the inforcement of his grand principle, *That every thing tendeth to the good of the Whole*; from whence his system gaineth the reciprocal advantage of having that grand Theorem realized by facts; and his facts justified on a principle of Right or Nature.

Thus I have endeavoured to analyse and explain the exact reasoning of these four epistles. Enough, I presume, to convince every one, that it hath a precision, force, and closeness of connection, rarely to be met with, even in the most formal treatises of philosophy. Yet in doing this, it is but too evident I have destroyed that grace and energy which animates the original. And now let the Reader believe, if he be so disposed, what M. de Croufaz, in his Critique upon this work, insinuates to be his own opinion, as well as that of his Friends.

That REASON, PASSION, answer one great aim ; 395
 That true SELF-LOVE and SOCIAL are the same ;
 That VIRTUE only makes our blifs below ;
 And all our Knowledge is, OURSELVES TO KNOW.

VARIATIONS.

VER. 397. *That Virtue only, etc.*] In the MS. thus,
 That just to find a God is all we can,
 And that the study of Mankind is Man.

COMMENTARY.

“ Some persons,” says he, “ have conjectured that Mr. Pope did not compose this Essay at once, and in a regular order; but that after he had written several fragments of poetry, all finished in their kind, (one for example, on the parallel between Reason and Instinct, another upon Man’s groundless Pride, another on the Prerogatives of human Nature, another on Religion and Superstition, another on the Original of Society, and several fragments besides on Self-love and the Passions) he tacked these together as he could, and divided them into four epistles; as, it is said, was the fortune of Homer’s Rhapsodies.” I suppose this extravagance will be believed just as soon of one as of the other. But M. Du Resnel, our Poet’s Translator, is not behind hand with the Critic, in his judgment on the work. “ The only reason,” says he, “ for which this poem can be properly termed an *Essay*, is, that the Author has not formed his plan with all the regularity of method which it might have admitted.” And again—“ I was, by the unanimous opinion of all those whom I have consulted on this occasion, and amongst these, of several *Englishmen* completely skilled in both Languages, obliged to follow a different method. The French are not satisfied with sentiments, however beautiful, unless they be methodically disposed: Method being the characteristic that distinguishes our performances from those of our neighbours,” etc. After having given many examples of the critical skill of this wonderful man of method, in the foregoing notes, it is enough just to have quoted this flourish of self-applause, and so to leave him to the laughter of the World.



THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

DEO OPT. MAX.

FATHER of All! in ev'ry Age,
In ev'ry Clime ador'd,
By Saint, by Savage, and by Sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great First Cause, least understood:
Who all my Sense confin'd
To know but this, that Thou art good,
And that myself am blind;

Yet gave me, in this dark Estate,
To see the Good from Ill;
And binding Nature fast in Fate,
Left free the Human Will.

What Conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This, teach me more than Hell to shun,
That, more than Heav'n pursue.

COMMENTARY.

Universal Prayer.] It may be proper to observe, that some passages in the preceding *Essay*, having been unjustly suspected of a tendency towards FATE and NATURALISM, the Author compos'd this Prayer as the sum of all, to shew, that his system was founded in *free-will*, and terminated in *piety*: that the First Cause was as well the Lord and Governor of the Universe as the Creator of it; and that, by submission to his will, (the great principle inforced throughout the *Essay*) was not meant suffering ourselves to be carried along by a blind determination, but resting in a religious acquiescence, and confidence full of *Hope* and *Immortality*. To give all this the greater weight, the Poet chose for his model the LORD'S PRAYER, which, of all others, best deserves the title prefixed to his Paraphrase.

N

What Blessings thy free Bounty gives,
 Let me not cast away ;
 For God is paid when Man receives,
 T' enjoy is to obey.

Yet not to Earth's contracted Span
 Thy Goodness let me bound,
 Or think thee Lord alone of Man,
 When thousand Worlds are round :

Let not this weak, unknowing Hand
 Presume thy Bolts to throw,
 And deal Damnation round the Land,
 On each I judge thy Foe.

If I am right, thy Grace impart,
 Still in the right to stay ;
 If I am wrong, oh teach my Heart,
 To find that better Way.

Save me alike from foolish Pride,
 Or impious Discontent,
 At aught thy Wisdom has deny'd,
 Or aught thy Goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's Woe,
 To hide the Fault I see ;
 That Mercy I to others show,
 That Mercy show to me.

NOTES.

*If I am right, thy Grace impart—
 If I am wrong, Oh teach my Heart]*

As the *imparting of Grace*, on the Christian system, is a stronger exertion of the Divine Power than the natural illumination of the heart, one would expect that *right* and *wrong* should change places; more aid being required to *restore* men to right, than to *keep* them in it. But as it was the Poet's purpose to insinuate that Revelation was the *right*, nothing could better express his purpose, than making the *right* secured by the guards of *grace*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

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Mean though I am, not wholly so,
Since quicken'd by thy Breath;
Oh lead me wheresoe'er I go,
Through this Day's Life or Death.

This Day, be Bread and Peace my Lot:
All else beneath the Sun,
Thou know'st if best bestow'd or not,
And let Thy Will be done.

To Thee, whose Temple is all Space,
Whose Altar, Earth, Sea, Skies!
One Chorus let all Being raise!
All Nature's Incense rise!

F I N I S.



